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Activist Knowledge and Nonviolent Action

Stories about Gezi Park protests in Turkey

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Abstract

Collective action is an alternative method of political participation that people resort to when they have no other channels to make their voices heard and pursue social change. This thesis focuses on nonviolent protest confronted by severe repression. The object of research is relationships between policing and forms of collective action in the interpretations of protest participants. To be precise, we examine how protesters' perceptions of their own selves and the police, in other words, activist knowledge, influence formulation of resistance as nonviolent. The empirical part of our study is based on the case of Gezi Park protests in Turkey in summer 2013.

The method of narrative inquiry guides both elaboration of our research framework and questions and analysis of empirical material. This choice was not only prompted by the methodological needs of studying interpretations, but also by observations on the data which revealed active engagement of protest participants in various forms of storytelling. The stories were collected from online sources and examined qualitatively.

Results of the analysis comprise participants' interpretations of policing and resistance. Everyone had a story to tell - the story of an encounter with police violence. This experience brought deep sense of injustice and helplessness or, on the contrary, empowerment reached through the mechanisms of moral outrage and practice of resistance. The narratives show that perceptions of the police's action and protesters' understanding of their own identity and role are tightly interconnected, which, in its turn, contributes to their conceptualization of resistance. As a conclusion, the police had a significant role in the construction of activist knowledge by Gezi Park protest participants and, as a consequence, the type of collective action. While this study does not claim to have discovered any causation, our findings underscore once more the importance of interpretation processes for development of protest and their value for research.

Key words: protest, nonviolence, narrative

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Chapter I. Introduction

Contemporary social and political life can hardly be imagined without social movements and protest. Throughout the history it has been brightly demonstrated how collective action can actualize dramatic changes in societies. Gradually, previously marginal means of political expression – demonstrations, rallies, and marches, - have become acceptable. It is remarkable that legal framework for recognition and protection of social, cultural and political rights exists on both international and, in most of the countries, on the national level, legitimizing participation in social movements and collective action.

However, despite the democratic developments, protests are still often confronted with excessive use of force by the police and other types of repression around the globe. Not only this constitutes a threat to exercise of the citizen's right, it also entails human suffering and, in more extreme cases, the loss of life. Moreover, state repression is challenging for any social movement or a campaign and may result in a number of dramatic consequences. Together with brutal policing, it is a part of different scenarios of the movements' relations with authorities, and it is important to understand effects of these conditions in various settings¹.

Sometimes, even peaceful protests also cannot avoid violent treatment on behalf of the state and the police. Preserving a nonviolent character of action becomes difficult under such circumstances. On the strategic level, violence can be perceived as more efficient, and, therefore, more appealing². On the tactical level, encounters with the police's use of force during the protest can be provocative for participants and may cause an outburst of violence in a particular event and long-term aggravation of relationships between security forces and activists³. Even though some mass nonviolent action campaigns proved to be successful in the face of oppressive regimes, their struggle was often costly. Moreover, countless initiatives faded under unsurmountable pressure, or, in other cases, activists resorted to radical action accompanied by

¹ Christian, Davenport, Hank Johnston, and Carol Mueller, eds. *Repression and Mobilization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005; Donatella della Porta, and Herbert Reiter, "The Policing of Protest in Western Democracies," in *Policing Protest: the Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998): 2

² Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, "Understanding strategic choice: The determinants of civil war and nonviolent campaign in self-determination disputes" *Journal of Peace Research*, N50 (May 2013):292.

³ Vern Neufeld, Redekop, and Shirley, Paré. *Beyond Control: A Mutual Respect Approach to Protest Crowd: Police Relations*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010): 117.

armed insurgency. Therefore, it is particularly interesting, how social movements maintain nonviolent character of action in such unfavorable conditions. These aspects coincide in the Gezi Park protest events in Turkey in 2013, which makes it a good object for examining suggested topic.

Protests in Turkey in summer 2013 were an unexpected and unusual event for the public in many ways. Numerous reviews, news reports, and interviews emphasize its massive scope; variation in the participants' age, political views, education and experience; tolerance demonstrated not only to different, but often rival groups; the bright, diverse and festive character of protest. But most importantly, the protest was peaceful even when confronted by brutal policing and multilateral state repression. The protests were also claimed to be leaderless and there was no particular personality or organization responsible for decision-making. This type of collective action is not unique and shares characteristics with other protests around the world, which makes it even more appealing as an object of analysis.

Current scholarship on social movements, policing and nonviolent resistance offers multiple insights for understanding relationships between nonviolent action and repression. Looking at the problem through the lenses of different disciplines is rewarding, since each field has its own research questions, interests and theoretical assumptions. At the same time, this diversity not only provides extensive knowledge on the subject, but also leaves blind spots. For example, researchers of social movements and policing tend to focus on mechanisms leading to riots, radicalization, or strategic innovation, leaving nonviolent action insufficiently problematized. Nonviolent resistance studies, in their turn, put emphasis on success and survival of a campaign, particularly in comparison with violent insurgency. Research that concentrates on the problem of sustaining nonviolent way of action is scarce at the moment⁴, leaving important scientific and practical issues unquestioned and unresolved.

This subject can be approached from different perspectives. Admittedly, studies on the relations between repression and collective action often demonstrate divergent results. For example, rational choice models can explain, why a movement opts for a particular strategy, but

⁴ Kurt Schock, "The practice and study of civil resistance" *Journal of Peace Research*, N50 (May 2013) 50: 284

the same conditions might be perceived differently⁵. Moreover, the situation can develop spontaneously. Addressing interpretation processes relevant to collective action helps understand not only what affects a certain model of action, but how, at least as it is perceived by participants. Additionally, because the problem of adherence to nonviolent action is not sufficiently examined, studying interpretations not only provides explanations, but explores ideas for future inquiries.

An insightful material for this paper was found in the work of a Swedish scholar Mattias Wahlström, whose study was conducted specifically on protesters-police relationships analyzed from different angles⁶. First, the researcher introduced concept of “activist knowledge” in order to examine protesters' perspective in negotiation process which affects interaction between police and activists⁷. Secondly, Wahlström presents a different approach to understanding escalation of violence on behalf of protesters by studying storytelling⁸. In doing so, the author convincingly demonstrates the benefits of analysis of interaction between police and protesters for understanding protesters' tactics and strategy and attention to meaning-making processes within social movement or protest campaign. It also reinforces the argument about the crucial role the police plays in development of protest. Of course, this approach is not completely new, but it showed successful integration of approaches to the subject of protest coming from different disciplines. Additionally, the concept of activist knowledge helps structuring different aspects of perceptions of protest participants which may include issues that go beyond the situation of protest.

This work modestly attempts to contribute to understanding of relationships between heavy-handed protest policing and peaceful resistance. The main research objective of this paper is to explore movements' interpretation processes with respect to police brutality and its relation to nonviolent character of protests. Our initial research question can be formulated in the following way:

⁵ Lee J. M. Seymour, “Acting without choosing: strategic choice and (non-)violent resistance”, Paper for the Actors, Strategies and Tactics in Contentious Direct Action workshop Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway, 8-9 May 2014, 3 <https://www.prio.org/utility/Download.aspx?x=428>

⁶ Wahlström, Mattias. “The Making of Protest and Protest Policing: Negotiation, Knowledge, Space, and Narrative”, *Gothenburg Studies in Sociology No 47*, University of Gothenburg, Department of Sociology, 2011. <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/25025>

⁷ Ibid., 35

⁸ Ibid., 42

How do participants of nonviolent protest interpret relations between policing style, reflected in activist knowledge, and their action?

This thesis has no ambition to infer causal relations between policing styles and nonviolent action, but aims at revealing how these relationships are interpreted by participants of protests. Answering the research questions would require an inquiry into how protesters portray and conceptualize the action of policemen and action of themselves. There are theoretical and empirical elaborations that seek to explain tactics and strategies of both. However, it is important to note that the same concept, such as brutal policing, might have a different meaning when used by activists.

Empirical analysis of the protests will be conducted with the method of narrative inquiry with a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. This choice stems from discussion on the research on interpretation and considerations on available data. The events of Gezi Park protest were organized and coordinated largely with the use of social media and there is an abundance of data comprised of different texts produced by participants that would make possible other forms of analysis as well. Story-like form of some of those texts makes the narrative method more appealing. Some participants published comprehensive accounts of their experience and observations, or, analysis of the events. From the perspective of social movement studies, story-telling plays a remarkable role in social movements as a mean of sense-making and, moreover, social control and mobilization⁹. That is why we consider analysis of narratives particularly rewarding as a method illuminating both interpretation processes and action.

Additionally, working with stories was a way to show empathy and pay respect to our subjects, the ones who participated in peaceful resistance despite risks and almost inevitable suffering. The stories are written to be read one day. Recognizing the importance of different kinds of data, quantitative and qualitative, we believe that listening to the ones who wish to speak improves understanding and does the justice to the authors.

The structure of the paper consists of chapters sequentially dealing with the literature on the subject and theory underlying the study, explanation of the methodology, presentation of

⁹ Joseph E. Davis, "Narratives and Social Movements. The power of stories" in *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements* ed. Joseph E. Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002): 16; Rober D. Benford, "Controlling Narratives and Narratives as Control within Social Movements," in *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements* ed. Joseph E. Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002): 56.

empirical analysis. The second chapter is devoted to examination of basic concepts, such as protest, factors affecting protest and studies on relationships between police and protesters produced within the frameworks of social movement, policing and nonviolent resistance studies. In the third chapter we are going to elaborate research questions on the basis of discussion on the protests in Turkey and relations between activist knowledge and social movements' narratives. Afterwards, the method of narrative analysis and data are going to be presented. The sixth chapter is comprised of the analysis of empirical material, stories from Gezi Park protest. Finally, we will draw a conclusion on the process of study and its results, supplemented by suggestions for further research.

Chapter II. Literature review

The problem of interaction between police and protesters is studied by various disciplines that have different purposes and interests which shape their approach to the subject and produce different views. In this section we are going to map the main fields of research and concepts relevant to our topic and review results of some empirical studies.

2.1. Theoretical approaches to studying protest and police interaction

On the basis of the literature review, three main disciplines dealing with protesters-police interaction can be distinguished – social movement, protest policing, and nonviolent resistance studies. Below we will map the main ideas elaborated within these approaches.

Studies of social movements as a discipline have experienced significant changes in their theoretical stance and research foci. Development of political process theory shifted attention of researchers from the questions of why social movements emerge to how mobilization occurs and how successful it is¹⁰. Cultural turn also brought new perspectives on social movements which emphasize interpretational processes and such elements of ideational sphere as values, identity and ideology¹¹. Social movement studies examine collective action at various levels from macro-level of waves of collective actions¹² to the level of a particular social movement¹³. Singular events, however, rarely become the unit of analysis and collective action is typically considered within the broader framework social, political, historical, and cultural settings. Notably, situational interaction between police and protesters is usually not seen as a subject on its own, but as a part of long-term processes. Social movement studies have also been criticized for prioritizing violent action and radicalization of protest as a research object¹⁴.

¹⁰ Graeme Chesters and Ian Welsh, *Social Movements: the key concepts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011): 138

¹¹ Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani. *Social movements. An introduction*, 87

¹² Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Collective Action, Social Movements and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

¹³ Francesca Poletta, “Plotting Protest: Mobilizing Stories in the 1960 Student Sit-Ins” in *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements* ed. Joseph E. Davis, 31-51. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.

¹⁴ Erica Chenoweth and Katherine G. Cunningham, “Understanding nonviolent resistance: An introduction”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 50, N 3 (May, 2013): 272

Policing studies represent another approach to police-protesters interaction. Research questions and vocabulary of this discipline have a strong influence of practical purposes of the police as an institution. Protest is often conceptualized as synonymous to public disorder, a problematic situation that has to be controlled. Consequently, research questions mainly concern reasons and factors leading to riots and methods of their prevention¹⁵. Advantage of the approach is its particular attention to relations between police and protesters.

Nonviolent resistance studies, a discipline focusing on peaceful collective action, developed as a result of increased interest in forms of conflict in which a party did not resort to violence and managed to succeed. The first inquiries in the subject, regarded now as “descriptive, applied or normative”¹⁶, addressed the idea of the power of nonviolent action by documenting cases, uncovering strategies and techniques of resistance, and advocating it.

Recently, scholars have voiced the need of systematic explanation of this phenomenon¹⁷. A special issue of *Journal of Peace Research* “Understanding Nonviolent Action” is illustrative with respects to recent developments and primary research topics on the within the approach¹⁸. The accent is placed on “the strategic use of nonviolence and its relationships to violence”¹⁹ including types of nonviolent actions, dynamics of contention and outcomes. Researchers of this subject are interested in the conditions of nonviolent movement emergence, strategic choices, and outcome. Therefore, the discipline, while providing healthy criticism on social movement studies also borrows their methods, approaches and vocabulary.

The three disciplines converge in some aspects and have different viewpoints in others. These issues will be explored further in the chapter.

On the basis of different approaches, we will recount the main characteristics of protest as a social phenomenon. Oxford dictionary suggests the following definition: “protest is a statement or action expressing disapproval or an objection to something”²⁰. Expression of

¹⁵ David P. Waddington, *Policing public order: Theory and practice* (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2007); Mike King and David P. Waddington, "Flashpoints Revisited: A Critical Application to the Policing of Anti-globalization Protest." *Policing and Society*, Vol. 15, 1(2005): 255-282; Noakes John Gillham and Patrick F., "More Than A March in a Circle": Transgressive Protests and the Limits of Negotiated Management." *Mobilization*, Vol. 12, N 4, (December 2007): 341-357.

¹⁶ Chenoweth and Cunningham, “Understanding nonviolent resistance”, 272

¹⁷ Ibid., 272

¹⁸ Special issue: Understanding nonviolent resistance, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 50, N 3 (May, 2013)

¹⁹ Chenoweth and Cunningham, «Understanding nonviolent resistance», 274

²⁰ Protest, Oxford Dictionary. Last accessed 29.03.2015 <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/protest>

disagreement is what makes it different from other gatherings and meetings. Social sciences are primarily interested in protest as a collective action, although it can also be individual.

Furthermore, there is a shared understanding of protest as a purposive behavior²¹. Several decades ago protest as an object of analysis in sociology and social psychology was considered to be an instance of behavior of an irrational crowd, a result of societal crises, and a symptom of negative processes in society²². This perspective still echoes in escalated force policing style oriented at dispersing the crowd instead of establishing negotiated control during the events²³. Purposiveness is also what distinguishes protest from public disorder, alongside with violence and damage that the latter one almost inevitably involves²⁴. Notably, protest and public disorder are practically inseparable in the early concepts described above, since neither would be regarded as a rational action.

It is also believed that protest is non-routinized way of political expression²⁵. Even though the level of its acceptance in different societies may vary, it has never become as institutionalized and ordinary as, for example, voting. Additionally, protest has multiple forms and their development is nourished by unlimited activists' creativity.

Illustrative of this aspect is the concept of contained and transgressive action²⁶ developed by scholars of social movement and later adopted by policing studies. Contained protest follows a pattern clear and familiar to the police, while transgressive action differs from it in tactics, organization and decision-making, being loose and decentralized and consisting of different groups, which frustrates the police²⁷. However, these definitions are conditional, ascribed by scholars and practitioners, and fluid, because a protest can include elements of both types or even change the pattern during the event. Also, while, for example, nonviolent action strategies and

²¹ Della Porta and Diani. *Social movements. An introduction*, 165; Ronald, McCarthy, Christopher Kruegler. *Toward research and theory building in the study of nonviolent action*, The Albert Einstein Institution (1993): 2

²² David Waddington and Mike King, "The disorderly crowd: from classical psychological reductionism to socio-contextual theory – the impact of public order policing strategies," *The Howard Journal*, Vol. 44, N 5 (December 2005): 493-494; Redekop and Paré. *Beyond Contro : A Mutual Respect Approach to Protest Crowd : Police Relations*, 20.

²³ Waddington and King, "The disorderly crowd", 492.

²⁴ Chesters and Welsh, *Social Movements: the key concepts*, 144.

²⁵ Chesters and Welsh, *Social Movements: the key concepts*, 144; della Porta and Mario Diani. *Social movements. An introduction*, 165

²⁶ Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 7

²⁷ Gillham and Patrick, "More Than A March in a Circle", 343.

tactics are documented, learned, reproduced and taught, their application varies depending on the context and relies on some degree of disruptiveness. Routine is therefore intrinsic to protest but it is present to a certain degree.

In addition to the commonly recognized characteristics of protest, nonviolent resistance studies define their typical object of analysis as “coordinated, purposive, and organized by a central leadership comprised of activists, public figures, and civilians”²⁸. While these characteristics are true for many cases, we should bear in mind the concept of transgressive protest representing a different form of collective action that can be nonviolent. Different types of nonviolent deserve academic attention too in order acquire better understanding of this phenomenon.

Conceptualization of protesters and police relationships can be observed on different levels. Social movements look at it mainly as at relationships between repression and mobilization, whereby repression is performed by different subjects, primarily the state and the police is seen as a part of political opportunity structure or mechanism of repression.

The concept of transformative event refers to an event that causes a dramatic shift in social movements’ strategy and tactics, demonstrates agreement between scholars that some of the occasion of repression can considerably affect collective action at different levels²⁹. It was later employed by nonviolent resistance researchers to explain the mechanism of backfire, or social movement attempts to counteract oppressive actions of the state and the police³⁰. The important insight of the concept is the interactive aspect of relationships between activists and other agents at different level and in different time frames. Another twist this theory offers is employment of oppression tactics of the opponent to gain success which can be exemplified by exposing state violence against peaceful protesters to receive support.

Most of the frameworks for studying relationships between repression and collective action regard the police as one of many other variables, typically as a part of political repression mechanism. However, according to the study of Koopmans, repression performed by state is

²⁸ Erica Chenoweth and Jay Ulfelder, “Can Structural Conditions Explain the Onset of Nonviolent Uprisings?,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 07.04.2015, 2

²⁹ McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 69

³⁰ Hess David and Martin Brian, “Repression, backfire, and the theory of transformative events.” *Mobilization*, Vol. 11, 1 (June 2006): 249.

more efficient rather than repression techniques of the police³¹. Therefore, studying factors of collective action requires differentiation between policing and other actions of authorities which have diverging nature and consequences. Another argument comes from Della Porta who reckons that in some occasions change in protest policing styles led to a different repertoire of action by protesters³².

Policing studies have a more precise focus on protesters and police interaction, whereby police pursues the goal of maintaining public order and protesters have own purposes to stage an action. Redekop took this conceptualization to the next level by formulating paradigms of police and protesters relationships that include corresponding styles, tactics and outcomes of actions and both subjects are seen as mutually conditioned³³. Policing style concept is also relatively inclusive because it accounts for the actions of both parties.

Police's action is seen as affected by a number of factors interpreted by the police who eventually act on the basis of police knowledge³⁴. The idea was later adapted by Wahlström as a notion of activist knowledge “in complimentary manner to denote corresponding views of the activists, their own selves and their relationships with the police”³⁵.

What concerns tactics of peaceful protesters, studies on nonviolent resistance make a distinction between principled and pragmatic nonviolence, the former one underscoring prime importance of nonviolent attitude as such, and the latter one treating nonviolence as a mean of struggle³⁶. This idea can be used for explanation of how activists opt for nonviolence and how it shapes their relationships with opponents. The difference between the two types can be blurry and can be a subject of study on its own³⁷.

To explain actions of protest participants, Donatella Della Porta suggests a notion of logic of protest that embraces activists' vision of strategy and corresponding tactics, connecting their action, purposes, motives and principles. She distinguishes the logic of numbers, which requires massive forms of protest, such as rallies, marchers, petitions, to show support for the cause; logic of damage that relies on increase of economic costs for the opponent by disrupting economical

³¹ Ruud Koopmans, “Dynamics of Repression and Mobilization: The German Extreme Right in The 1990s” *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* , Vol. 2, No. 2 (September 1997): 163.

³² della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: an Introduction*, 197

³³ Redekop and Pare, *Beyond Control*, 116

³⁴ Della Porta and Reiter, *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*, 21.

³⁵ Wahlström, “*The Making of Protest and Protest Policing: Negotiation, Knowledge, Space, and Narrative*,” 42.

³⁶ Thomas Weber, “Nonviolence Is Who? Gene Sharp and Gandhi,” *Peace & Change* Vol. 28, N 2 (2003), 250

³⁷ Weber, “Nonviolence Is Who? Gene Sharp and Gandhi”, 255

routine or literally destroying valuable objects; logic of witness which implies that methods of actions must embody purposes and actions of protesters³⁸. Logic of protest is presumably reflected in relations with the police as well, for instance, in the kind of a disorder or action the police has to control and possible attitude to policemen.

The above described notions of activist knowledge, principled and strategic nonviolence, and logic of protest imply two aspects relevant to action of protest participants. On the one hand, activists have certain goals and operate under circumstances they are aware of to some extent. On the other hand, principles, moral judgment, and symbolic elements affect the process of rational choice. The result would depend on how protest participants, individually and collectively, make sense of these conditions.

Another concept used to describe activists' behavior is nonviolent discipline that remains under-researched.³⁹ The reasons for the lack of attention to it can be multiple, one of which is formulation that does not fit conceptualization of behavior in social movement studies. At the same time, frame and narrative analysis offer a theory of social control in social movements⁴⁰, and, consequently, collective action, and a method to study these processes.

Both frame and narrative analysis perspectives share the idea that interpretive work of social movements plays an immense role in mobilization, including identification of problems and solutions, formulating incentives for participation and providing instruments for social control⁴¹. At the same time the ideas of narratives and frames have significant differences. Frames are "interpretive schemata that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large"⁴². Therefore, they do not provide a perception of as such but rather guide it. Narratives, on the contrary, are richer in content and essentially project construction of reality by activists by connecting different events and phenomena in relationships supplemented by implicit moral considerations⁴³. Both frames and narratives have a high

³⁸ della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: an Introduction*, 177-178.

³⁹ Schock, "The practice and study of civil resistance", 284

⁴⁰ Rober D. Benford, "Controlling Narratives and Narratives as Control within Social Movements," in *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements* ed. Joseph E. Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002): 56.

⁴¹ Davis, "Narratives and Social Movements. The power of stories", 11

⁴² Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26: 612.

⁴³ Davis, "Narratives and Social Movements. The power of stories", 16

potential to explain interpretation of reality by protest participants, but while frame analysis would be more useful in understanding how the construction occurs, narratives uncover what the result of this process is.

To conclude this section, protest is a purposive non-routinized action that takes various organizational forms and employs a wide range of tactics, including nonviolence. Actions of the protesters can be explained from the rational choice perspective emphasizing opportunities, goals and cost of participation. However, there are other factors that influence decision-making such as principles and symbolic meaning of action, which requires exploration of interpretation processes. Also, police can have various effects on protesters not only at the level of political opportunity structure, but also at the situational level and for this reason their interaction deserves to be a subject of study on its own.

2.2. Empirical studies on repression of protest

This section will discuss results of different studies on the relations between police and protesters. Policing as an instrument of control on social movements and, moreover, a part of political opportunity structure and state repression, affects aims, strategies and repertoires of actions of protesters⁴⁴. While the influence of policing is unquestionable, results are often contradictory, just as the effects of state repression in general.

Paradigms of police-protesters interactions⁴⁵ that imply policing styles and corresponding action of protesters can be considered ideal type models. They are difficult to imagine in real life because mutuality between actors, as an underlying assumption, is overestimated. For example, negotiated control model presupposes cooperation between protesters and police to ensure agreement on the form and boundaries of protest as well as communication and coordination. Sometimes negotiated control management model failed in policing a transgressive protest when activists found it to be oppressive and decided against cooperation, causing the police to turn to the escalated force model⁴⁶. Hence, interpretation of police's action played a significant role in development of the events.

⁴⁴ della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements: an Introduction*, 200.

⁴⁵ Redekop and Pare, *Beyond Control*, 139

⁴⁶ Gillham and Patrick, "More Than A March in a Circle", 341

It has been found that through different mechanisms, repressive policing tends to discourage peaceful protest and increases potential for radical actions⁴⁷. Redekop provides a supporting argument for this scenario based on the social psychological concept of mimetic structures, according to which parties to the conflict mimic actions of one another escalating conflict and violence⁴⁸.

However, this observation is not consistent with exhaustive analysis of nonviolent resistance which suggests that activists are able to sustain repression and maintain peaceful character of their action despite police violence.⁴⁹ The problem of these finding is the focus on celebration of success, rather than explanation of mechanisms that make consistent nonviolent action possible.

Another possible outcome of repression and mobilization dynamics is adaptation. Results of several research projects demonstrate that protesters in different societies, democratic or nondemocratic, do adapt tactics to policing by adopting increasingly simpler and less contentious protest tactics to avoid arrests⁵⁰ and sticking to the framework of legitimate and acceptable behavior from perspectives of both the state authorities and the public, even if it contradicts purposes of expressing dissent⁵¹. The insights from these cases may suggest that peaceful and acceptable strategies are preferable for the social movements in authoritarian regimes for reducing the cost of participation.

Furthermore, repression offers pragmatic advantages which are linked to the theory of backfire elaborated by Hess and Martin on the basis of the Sharp's notion of "political jiu-jitsu"⁵². Drawing on both theory and cases, the authors demonstrate that nonviolent actors can exploit repression by exposing injustices done by their opponents, undermining their legitimacy,

⁴⁷ Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2006): 193. Gillham and Patrick, "More Than A March in a Circle", 343.

⁴⁸ Redekop and Pare, *Beyond Control*, 118

⁴⁹ Hess and Martin, "Repression, backfire, and the theory of transformative events," 254; Erica Chenoweth and Maria E. Stephan "Why civil resistance works: the strategic logic of nonviolent conflict" *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Summer 2008)

⁵⁰ Larissa Titarenko, John D. McCarthy, Clark McPhail, *et al.* "The Interaction of State Repression, Protest Form and Protest Sponsor Strength During the Transition from Communism in Minsk, Belarus, 1990-1995," *Mobilization*, Vol. 6, N 2, 2001 (Fall): 145.

⁵¹ Lynette J. Chua, "Pragmatic resistance, Law, and Social Movements in Authoritarian States: The Case of Gay Collective Action in Singapore," *Law and Society Review*, Vol. 46, N. 4(2012), 714.

⁵² Hess and Martin, "Repression, backfire, and the theory of transformative events", 251

prompting an outrage in other social groups, and attracting their support⁵³. Obviously, maintaining nonviolent tactics of action is salient for backfire because it allows activists to emphasize their legitimacy in contrast to their opponent. More radically, Koopmans suggests that movements whose identity is based on the opposition of “us and them” might even seek for state repression in order to expose its injustices and the need for change⁵⁴. The process of backfire, however, does not happen by itself, but requires efforts of the activists⁵⁵. Perception of state repression as an advantage or a threat is not only a theoretical elaboration; these divergent views may appear among collective action participants, influencing their tactics and strategy.

In addition to radicalization or adaptation, some studies show that police violence during public demonstration may become a motivating factor for participation because experience of violence can cause moral outrage and, in doing so, contribute to strengthening solidarity⁵⁶. This effect is even more obvious in the case of peaceful protest which is more legitimate and state violence against which would be considered “undeserved”⁵⁷. This argument is consistent with observation on the case of Turkey where police use of force against peaceful demonstration was regarded as one of the most important reasons for joining protest for the majority of participants.

Some studies on nonviolent resistance their research task as identification of conditions under which a violent or a nonviolent strategy is more likely. Asal argues that movements having gender in their agenda are more likely to be peaceful⁵⁸. While this is valuable idea about a certain trend in nonviolent strategies, its mechanisms exploration of how exactly gender issues included in the agenda affect strategies. Looking at movement's interpretation of fight for gender equality, their role in society and methods of action could provide additional clues. For example, such actions can be interpreted as undertaken within the logic of witness, suggested by Della Porta, which was presented in the previous section.

The discussion above has demonstrated that perception and ideational aspects are significant for collective action and, consequently, its explanation. For this reason, we will briefly discuss some insights from studies that focused on interpretation processes. Interpretative approaches to

⁵³ Hess and Martin, “Repression, backfire, and the theory of transformative events”, 264.

⁵⁴ Koopmans, «Dynamics of Repression and Mobilization»: 152.

⁵⁵ Hess and Martin, “Repression, backfire, and the theory of transformative events”, 252.

⁵⁶ Karl-Dieter Opp, and Wolfgang Roehl, "Repression, Micro mobilization, and Political Protest," *Social Forces*, Vol. 69, 2(1990): 544.

⁵⁷ Koopmans, «Dynamics of Repression and Mobilization»: 153

⁵⁸ Victor Asal, Richard Legault, Ora Szekely, and Jonathan Wilkenfeld, «Gender ideologies and forms of contentious mobilization in the Middle East», *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 50, N. 3 (May 2013): 315.

explanation of relationships between police and protesters do not intend to show tendencies, but they uncover the way how participants might explain their participation and tactics in protest. Here we will review how narrative perspective illuminates the aspect of nonviolent action and interactions with the police.

As a part of multidimensional research on protests in two Scandinavian cities, Wahlström analysis cultural aspect of interaction between protesters and police from protester's perspective by exploring "culturally based justifications for violence" in concrete situations stressing the importance of studying stories of participants⁵⁹. Such an approach is particularly relevant to transgressive protests, spontaneous collective actions, often decentralized. According to Wahlström, after the events activists tend to justify their resort to violent action by pointing at polices' excessive force and thereby constructing different types of provocation plots.⁶⁰

In the another study of narratives of social movements, in contrast to previous example, Benford maintains that narratives of struggle are capable of legitimating nonviolent tactics thereby controlling individual actions⁶¹. If a narrative is assumed to have a controlling power, then it can establish acceptable or unacceptable forms of behavior and provide evaluation for other subjects' action. Benford does not emphasize the role of the police as such but it can be deduced it implies maintaining nonviolence discipline even if the security forces resort to the use of force.

Hence, the inquiries narratives provide two different scenarios on relationships between police and protesters. It should be noted, however, that these studies are based on different narratives: Wahlström examines narratives created after protest events; Benford's narratives are constructed on the previous experience and premeditate further action. Also, Wahlström studies individual participants' narratives, while Benford deals with collective myths. However, justification and controlling narratives of both authors do not differ significantly in their function as each of them tends to explain what is acceptable and what is not.

To summarize the discussion above, interaction of police and protesters has diverging outcomes which are difficult to determine when policing is subsumed in the concept of

⁵⁹ Wahlström, "The Making of Protest and Protest Policing", 43

⁶⁰ Mattias Wahlström, "Taking Control or Losing Control? Activist Narratives of Provocation and Collective Violence" *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest*, Vol. 10, N 4, November 2011, 367.

⁶¹ Benford, "Controlling Narratives and Narratives as Control within Social Movements," 57.

repression. Violent policing can provoke escalation of violence on the one hand, being less consistent and legitimate, and at the same time strengthen collective action including nonviolent resistance and even benefit it. However, interaction of the two parties cannot only be seen in terms of actions and reactions, since there are other important factors, both internal, such as social control and principles of action, and external to the movement, such as the state or the public. Social control within the movement does not evolve independently from conditions. Such aspects as aims, principles, experience are woven into means of social control. In our view, example, narratives can give a glimpse on how multiple factors eventually affect behavior of protesters and their choice of tactics.

2.3. Conclusion

A brief mapping of studies on interaction between police and protesters shows complexity of these relationships and controversy in results while there is little explanation on such diversity. One reason for that can be relative one-sidedness of the disciplines in a number of ways: focus on such units of analysis as the whole social movements instead of police-protesters interaction as in social movement studies; preoccupation with success of actions either of police or protesters as in nonviolent resistance or policing studies; underestimation of differences between the movements and their forms and preferences for a certain subjects, such as “campaign with maximalists' goals”⁶² to which nonviolent action is obviously not limited.

Hence, it can be suggested to shift attention to objects and units of analysis that are usually not interesting to the disciplines. By adopting policing studies perspective we can focus on the interaction between police and protesters; shift emphasis from evaluation of the event to its exploration independently on success; and examine types of campaign that is often ignored in nonviolent resistance studies, such as action that is spontaneous, transgressive, decentralized and lacking explicit strategy. At the same time, we can apply relevant concepts elaborated within social movement and nonviolent resistance studies.

Our interest, at the same time, lies in the way protest participants maintain peaceful character of their action. Because review of studies and viewpoints provide varying results and recent emphasis on importance of interpretation of different factors of the police, this paper is urged to focus on meaning-making processes. This approach has the potential to expose how different factor are comprehended by protesters and what relations they have to their action. We

⁶² Chenoweth and Ulfelder, “Can Structural Conditions Explain the Onset of Nonviolent Uprisings?”, 14

do not conceptualize our object of analysis as nonviolent discipline, because it has a connotation of rules that are imposed. Rather, nonviolence is a method of action and a certain model of behavior which is subject to comprehension and negotiation.

We assume that police and protesters along other with factors mutually condition each other's actions. Moreover, it happens through the mechanisms of sense-making in which participants are constantly involved. Results of these interpretation processes can shed light on how such concepts as transformational events or describing nonviolence as pragmatic or principled are represented in activists' perceptions and how they are related to policing.

For the purpose of research, we will use the concept of activist knowledge as overarching since it embraces both activists perception of themselves and their role and their understanding of the police. The following chapter will present a more detailed discussion on this notion.

Chapter III. Understanding Gezi Park protests

This chapter's purpose is to develop our research question on the basis of information about the case suggested for analysis, previously introduced ideas and additional theoretical elaborations. The first section examines the main features of protests in Turkey in summer 2013. The second part of the chapter is devoted to discussion on the notion of activist knowledge and its relation to the concept of narratives. Finally, in the last section we will outline the research question and suggest concepts that can be used for analysis of empirical material.

3. 1. Background and development of Gezi Park protest

Gezi Park in the Taksim suburb of Istanbul is a rare green recreational area in the center of a busy city. The government's plan to demolish the park in order to give way to new construction projects was opposed by environmentalists who eventually set up a camp in the park to protect it from destruction⁶³. Thus, the original environmental protest was not spontaneous and did not happen in an instance. However, authorities' response considerably changed its character leading to what we know as Gezi Park protests. When participants of the encampment were violently attacked by the police, information about the event quickly spread in the social media provoking more people to join the protest⁶⁴.

In description of the main events, we will narrow down the focus to interactions between police and protesters. The events can be presented as going through several phases. The first phase was presented above. The encampment in the park which started on the 28st of May 2013 was dispersed by the police several times before the raid on the 31st of May turned it into a long struggle between security forces and the protesters for the ground in the park involving growth of both injuries and the number of participants⁶⁵. That day the protest started spreading to other

⁶³Wilco van Herpen, "Istanbul Gezi Park", *Hurriet Daily News*, 05.06.2013.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/istanbul-gezi-park.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48187&NewsCatID=379>

⁶⁴ "Raid on 'Occupy Taksim Park' demonstrators triggers outcry", *Hurriet Daily News*, 30.05.2013 .
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/raid-on-occupy-taksim-park-demonstrators-triggers-outcry.aspx?pageID=238&nID=47870&NewsCatID=341>

⁶⁵ "Occupy Taksim' grows in spite of crackdown", *Hurriet Daily News*, 31.05.2013 .
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/occupy-taksim-grows-in-spite-of-crackdown.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48004&NewsCatID=341>

cities⁶⁶. As we can see, initially small-scale demonstration significantly changed its pattern and a new phase of the action started as a result of police crackdown serving as a transformative event. Outraged by the police action, people started gathering to express their solidarity, support and deep disagreement not only in Istanbul but in other cities too.

Developments of this multi-cited protest were non-linear. For example, while encampment in the park in Istanbul was tolerated until a certain point in time⁶⁷, other cities experienced an escalated force policing and temporary withdrawal of the police throughout the period of resistance⁶⁸. Nevertheless, the protests should be understood in the frame of a single campaign.

What concerns Istanbul in particular, between 1st and 11th of June, the police was applying force to prevent people from reaching the main site of resistance – the camp in Gezi Park - or leaving it freely, and abstained from entering the park itself⁶⁹. However, on the 11th of June the police began attempts to recapture the park⁷⁰ marking the end of the phase of resistance that would be described as “festive”, “happy” and “beautiful”⁷¹. This second crack-down on the park encampment which ended with successful expel of protesters from Gezi Park became the event that prompted protests in Istanbul to change its pattern again, forcing participants to fill other streets of Istanbul and other parks where they held forums⁷².

Intensive protests lasted approximately until the end of June, slowly waning. The Park, which protection originally contributed to mobilization, remained untouched according to the

⁶⁶ “Turkey arrests anti-government protesters”, *Al Jazeera*, 31.05.2013 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/05/2013531112443894367.html>

⁶⁷ “Police withdraw from Taksim after violent crackdown as protesters remain defiant on 5th day,” *Hurriet Daily News*, 31.05.2013. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/police-withdraw-from-taksim-after-violent-crackdown-as-protesters-remain-defiant-on-5th-day.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48009&NewsCatID=341>

⁶⁸ “Timeline of Gezi Park protests”, *Hurriet Daily News*, 21.06.2013. Retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/timeline-of-gezi-park-protests-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48321&NewsCatID=341>

⁶⁹ “Turkey protests: Clashes rage in Istanbul's Besiktas”, *BBC News*, 03.06.2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22749750>

⁷⁰ “Turkey protests: Police clear Istanbul's Taksim Square”, *BBC News*, 11.06.2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-22851765>

⁷¹ Melis B.”Living in Taksim – Report, 10-11 June 2013”, *Sinefil. A Blog of (extremely) short film reviews. And other things*. 14.06.2013. <http://sinefilmelisb.blogspot.fi/2013/06/living-in-taksim-report-june-10-11-2013.html>

⁷² Ayla Jean Yackley, “Sporadic clashes in Turkey as Erdogan asserts authority”, *Reuters*, 16.06.2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/16/us-turkey-protests-idUSBRE9590QA20130616>

court decision⁷³ that could mark a resolution of the conflict. However, protests continued sparking around the country on various occasions.

Further we will describe what was happening in the with the focus on police-protesters interaction.

The Turkish police was blamed for excessive use of force in their efforts to control the protest by using various means of dispersion⁷⁴. Amnesty International report presents a lengthy account of suffering inflicted on protesters, such as injuries, some of which were fatal, physical and psychological abuse in detention which constituted breaches of legislation in human and citizen's rights committed by the police⁷⁵. Evidently, the cost of participation in the protest was very high. In doing so, the police subjected protesters to an immense repression making action physically difficult or almost impossible and deterring people from participation. Reports on attempts to negotiate with protesters are practically absent. This can be described as escalated force policing style, because the police's action comprised attempts to disperse and discourage protest participants.

Protesters were found to have a rich repertoire of action. It included traditional forms of protest such as a sit-in⁷⁶, march⁷⁷, and other mass gatherings. Encampment or occupation was also characteristic of Gezi Park protests whereby participants created their own infrastructure on the occupied sites with shops, veterinary, library and even gardens⁷⁸. Resistance was a venue for various forms of artistic protest left numerous artifacts. Indicative was humor of resistance targeting agents of repression and pointing at the situation of indiscriminate violence against

⁷³ Ayla Jean Yackley, "Turkish court blocks disputed park project", *Reuters*, 03.07.2013.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/03/us-turkey-court-taksim-idUSBRE9620T220130703>

⁷⁴ "Turkey accused of gross human rights violations in Gezi Park protests", *Amnesty International*, 02.10.2013.

www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2013/10/turkey-accused-gross-human-rights-violations-gezi-park-protests/

⁷⁵ "Turkey: Gezi Park protests: Brutal denial of the right to peaceful assembly in Turkey", Amnesty International, October 2013. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR44/022/2013/en/>

⁷⁶ "Protesters halt demolition of Taksim park, start night-long sit-in", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 28.05.2013.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/protesters-halt-demolition-of-taksim-park-start-night-long-sit-in.aspx?pageID=238&nID=47746&NewsCatID=341>

⁷⁷ "Police use tear gas against crowd who tries to cross the Bosphorus Bridge", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 16.06.2013.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/police-use-tear-gas-against-crowd-who-tries-to-cross-the-bosphorus-bridge.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48876&NewsCatID=341>

⁷⁸ Fabien Tepper, "Occupied Istanbul: Scenes from the Front Lines", *YES! Magazine*, 07.06.2013.

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/occupied-istanbul-scenes-from-the-front-lines>

peaceful protesters⁷⁹. While there are reports on occasional instances of violence against policemen or property damage, it had a strikingly smaller proportion compared to police actions⁸⁰. Employing Della Porta's terminology, we can conclude that protesters acted both within the logic of numbers, by displaying wide support in mass actions of sit-ins and marches, and the logic of witness, by engaging in symbolic actions and emphasizing peaceful character of actions.

Gezi resistance embodied plurality in many ways – plurality of participants, opinions and grievances and forms of protest. Surveys conducted during the protest demonstrated such concerns as disproportional use of force by the police and various policies of the governing party and back then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan regarding economical and environmental issues as well as lifestyles of the citizens⁸¹. Thus the spectrum of grievances was very broad.

As could be expected, such wide array of grievances voiced during the events was raised by representatives of various social groups with common and diverging anxieties. Young, middle aged and senior citizens, men and women, students and graduates⁸², fans of rival soccer teams⁸³, and representatives of different political movements⁸⁴ protested together in the city streets and squares across the country.

In the case of Gezi Park protests the peaceful character of action was sustained against multilateral repression at both institutional and situational levels. Development of events is consistent with previously discussed theoretical claims in the effects of situational repression that can lead to escalation. This process is observed not only in the increasing number of participants, but also in diversity of reaction to the police such as humor and symbolic actions, but not in radicalization and resort to violence.

⁷⁹ Arda İbikoğlu, "Protest humor: Let's use disproportional intelligence", *The garden of speculating cats*, 06.03.2013. <http://ardaibikoglu.blogspot.com.tr/2013/06/protest-humor-lets-use-improportionate.html>

⁸⁰ "Turkey: Gezi Park protests: Brutal denial of the right to peaceful assembly in Turkey", 12

⁸¹ Coşkun Taştan, "Gezi Park Protest in Turkey: A qualitative field analysis", *Insight Turkey*. Vol. 15, No. 3, 2013, 32; "Gezi Report. Public perception of the 'Gezi protest'. Who were the people at Gezi park?" *KONDA. Research and consultancy*. 05.06.2013, 20.

⁸² "Gezi Report. Public perception of the 'Gezi protest'. Who were the people at Gezi park?", 7.9.11;

⁸³ "Supporter groups of Istanbul's three major teams join forces for Gezi Park", *Hurriet Daily News*, 30.05.2013. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/supporter-groups-of-istanbuls-three-major-teams-join-forces-for-gezi.aspx?NewsCatID=341&nID=48007&pageID=238>

⁸⁴ Constanze Letsch, "Turkey protests spread after violence in Istanbul over park demolition", *The Guardian*, 01.06.2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/31/istanbul-protesters-violent-clashes-police>

This could be explained as strategic adaptation suggested by previous empirical research on social movements in countries with repressive regimes. Repertoire of resistance in Turkey did not change significantly with respect to encounters with the police, since the main forms of action inevitably involved facing security forces. How in that case adaptation could have taken place? It is possible to theorize that even though protest remained a high-risk activity, violence on behalf of protesters would give the police the discretion to resort to more extreme measures and even kill participants.

At the same time, nonviolence is activists under repression and thus can be used strategically. Indeed, the protest positioned itself as nonviolent⁸⁵. The message to the audience was clear – contrast between peaceful action of protesters and police violence, which was of course thought-provoking for other citizens and eventually brought tens of thousands to the street. But because the protest were so loosely organized, it is difficult to trace how the decision was made and whether activists had any intention to use nonviolence as a mean of struggle when they had other options too.

Finally, nonviolence in this case could have been principled, embodying ideas of the activists. Even though the word “nonviolent” is not present in most of the articles or slogans or other possible indicators, nonverbally this statement appears in the photos and actions that became iconic. Most bright examples are “women in red” gassed by a policemen while simply holding to her place with her hands down⁸⁶ and “standing man” who just stood in the Taksim square without taking any action against anybody⁸⁷. Moreover, because police use of force was the trigger and the reason for participation in the protest, violence on behalf of protesters would contradict with their cause for dissent. Consequently, peaceful type of action could have been based on the moral principles too.

⁸⁵ Arda İbikoğlu, “Gezi protest in Turkey: A war of narratives?” *The garden of speculating cats* (blog), 13.06.2013. <http://ardaibikoglu.blogspot.com.tr/2013/06/gezi-protests-in-turkey-war-of.html>

⁸⁶ Fisher, M. “The photo that encapsulates Turkey's protests and the severe police crackdown” *The Washington Post*, 03.06.2013 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/06/03/the-photo-that-encapsulates-turkeys-protests-and-the-severe-police-crackdown/>

⁸⁷ Genc, K. “The standing man of Taksim Square: a latterday Bartleby”, *The Guardian*, 20.06.2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/jun/20/standing-man-istanbul-bartleby-melville>

To conclude with, interaction between police and protesters could have been a significant condition affecting behavior of the latter ones, whether restricting it or being used as a mean of struggle. It is difficult to identify factors indispensable for development of these, since all of them may unfold under the same conditions. Consequently, we have little means to rule out an explanation or find sufficient evidence for one of them by analyzing only facts about the event. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous chapter, interpretive processes have an immense role in development of protest tactics and strategies, as well as social control that helps maintaining a certain type of behavior. Hence, it is reasonable to examine the ways in which police actions are comprehended by the protesters.

One of the striking features of the Gezi Park protest was overwhelming production of information specifically in the Internet by participants and supporters. Remarkably, activists not simply engaged in sharing news on the situation or providing analysis, they told stories about their participation. These accounts of events are particularly useful as they contain not only information about the events, but their interpretation from the point of view of participant.

3.2. Activist knowledge and narratives

Here we are going to discuss this notion, explain its application in this paper and then elaborate on its relations with narratives of social movements' participants.

The term "activist knowledge" was introduced by Wahlström in order to capture activists' perception of reality which includes both them and the police and it is based on the corresponding concept of "police knowledge"⁸⁸. Police knowledge is understood as «construction of external reality and perception of their role by policemen individually and collectively»⁸⁹. Hence, the concept does not only refer to polices' perception of procedures, duties, and experience but also police's function and image. Similar mental constructs can be developed by protesters which would include such elements as knowledge about the police (their tactics, purposes, results of previous encounters), role of protesters and other factors meaningful to protesters.

⁸⁸ Wahlström, Mattias. "Negotiating political protest in Gothenburg and Copenhagen" in *Policing of transnational protest* ed. Della Porta, Donatella, Peterson, Abby, Reiter, Herbert (Ashgate Publisher Group, 2006):120

⁸⁹ Donatella della Porta, and Herbert Reiter, "The Policing of Protest in Western Democracies," 21.

Della Porta treats police knowledge as the main variable between structure and action⁹⁰. It should be presumed that there are other variables intervening collective and individual decision-making. At the same time, their role can be observed in the interpretations by policemen resulting in the police knowledge. Likewise, by using the concept of activist knowledge we do not try to diminish the role of various factors, rather approaching them in a different manner – as their construction by protesters.

At least in the known to us academic work, no clear distinction has been made between individual and collective level of police knowledge. For the purpose of this research, we will assume that activist knowledge reflects individual and collective level, since, just as in the case of frames and narratives, it is created through interaction of both.

The notion of activist knowledge is used in this paper to distinguish aspects related to police-protesters interaction from other details that are inevitably present in protesters' interpretations. Activist knowledge refers particularly to experience of participation.

From narratives to activist knowledge

It is assumed, that police knowledge serves as a “filter” to other multiple factors of protest policing⁹¹. It resembles social movement frames that are formulated as interpretational schemata. However, because it is not the interpretation itself, it is not sufficient for representing activist knowledge

Activist knowledge is in the first place an analytical concept and requires special means to elucidate it. As a construction of reality, it is essentially a result of interpretational processes which can be studied with the help of narratives. According to Wahlström, storytelling should not be dismissed as a part of activist knowledge⁹². Meanings of both partially overlap, when thinking of stories as “as a social act and form of explanation.”⁹³ However, narratives embrace activist knowledge by putting different elements of protest participants' perception together. Narrative is also a form in which the activist knowledge is expressed. Moreover, narratives are exposed to audience and are more accessible, objectifying knowledge.

Functionality behind stories provides a link to a strong connection between interpretation processes and action of protesters, since this construction works as a filter for other conditions.

⁹⁰ Donatella della Porta, and Herbert Reiter, "The Policing of Protest in Western Democracies", 22.

⁹¹ Wahlström, “Negotiating political protest in Gothenburg and Copenhagen”, 120

⁹² Wahlström, “The Making of Protest and Protest Policing: Negotiation, Knowledge, Space, and Narrative”, 45.

⁹³ Davis, “Narratives and Social Movements. The power of stories,” 16

To this date Wahlström's work on the provocation narratives of participants of protest remains one of the singular attempts to explore meaning-making activity of social movement with respect to protesters-police interaction

Clearly activist knowledge in no way can be reduced solely to the narratives, a part of it might not be grasped from texts, but stories are a special form of data that is produced by the object of analysis whereby the storyteller himself punctuates and emphasizes details of the narrative and provides connections. This is why narratives are selected to be the main analytical concept for this study, while there is no claim that stories are the source of exhaustive knowledge. As next, we will approach the theory of narratives.

Theory of narratives

Narrative is a complex notion employed in a wide range of research disciplines from literary study and criminology to psychotherapy and historiography. The first studies treated narratives primarily as data, and currently it is understood not only as an account of past experiences but it is believed to be woven into human life and play a number of roles in it⁹⁴.

One of the prominent researchers of narratives, Donald Polkinghorne, writes:

*«Narrative is a meaning structure that organizes events and human action into a whole, thereby attributing significance to individual actions and events according to their effect on the whole. »*⁹⁵

This is one of the universal definitions of narratives and it reflects its main features and functions compared to other genres of texts, which is to present view of the author where different elements of the story are assigned a meaning and a place.

More specifically, narratives display a sequence of events organized by way of emplotment, which essentially distinguished from other text that contain an account of events.⁹⁶ Finally, the plot implies a moral meaning.⁹⁷ The aim of narration is not solely to recount events but to comprehend them.

⁹⁴ Matti Hyvärinen, " 26. Analyzing narratives and story-telling" in *The Sage Handbook of Social Research Methods* ed. Alasuutari, P., Bickman, L. and Brannen, J. (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2008): 448

⁹⁵ Donald Polkinghorne, *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988) :18

⁹⁶ Czarniawska, Barbara. *Narratives in Social Science Research*. (London, England: SAGE Publications, Ltd., 2008): 19

⁹⁷ Davis, "Narratives and Social Movements. The power of stories," 13; Poletta, "Plotting protest: mobilizing stories in the 1960 student sit-ins ..", 33.

Transformation, or, essentially, change is another indispensable element of narrative⁹⁸ which is relevant to the theory of transformative events in social movement mobilization. Studying stories help understanding transformations from participants' perspective. These are the protesters who can define what the transformative event is and how it affected their action. Narratives can also reveal motivation, reasoning, and justifications for actions.

Narratives are not devoid of social experience, norms and culture. Stories have two-fold relationships with cultural scripts – they both imply them and deviate from them⁹⁹.

Cultural scripts might not fit in the human construction of life which causes discrepancies that are reconciled with the help of narratives¹⁰⁰. Bruner suggested that “narrative's point is to resolve the unexpected, to settle the authors doubt, or, in some way to redress or explicate the ‘imbalance’ that prompted telling of the story in the first place”¹⁰¹. While recounting experience of protest, activists punctuate different elements as imbalances or discrepancies that they personally see and provide explanations.

Furthermore, Bruner claims, that «all stories are justifications from perspective of a norm»¹⁰². This proposition links discussion on theory of narratives to Wahlström's point of departure in his inquiry about provocation plots constructed by participants of demonstrations that turned violent. Violent action of protesters can be in this case reframed as an occurrence that represents discrepancy, something was not supposed to happen, something that does not correspond to the script, and, therefore has to be justified.

The concept of cultural scripts induced comprehension of one more important feature of narratives. Through sense-making mechanisms they not only allow interpretation of events but also to find a position of a human in a network of relationships interwoven with cultural scripts. Storyteller can have a position of an agent, an experience/witness or a patient, which corresponds to certain limited alternatives of action¹⁰³. Activist knowledge also includes the perception of activist's role from different perspectives, be it a role during the events or a broader role of a citizen. The role implies interaction with other agents including the police. By narrating experience in the protest, activist has to assign position to him or herself and the police, that would be interdependent in the story.

⁹⁸ Davis, “Narratives and Social Movements. The power of stories,” 11

⁹⁹ Jerome Bruner. *The Narrative Construction of Reality*. *Critical Inquiry*, N 18 (Autumn 1991), 11

¹⁰⁰ Hyvärinen, “26. Analyzing narratives and story-telling”, 456

¹⁰¹ Bruner, *The Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991): 121

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 96

¹⁰³ Hyvärinen, “26. Analyzing narratives and story-telling”. 454.

In her research on development of group identity of Anonymous Alcoholics' members, through careful examination of the organization's literature Caroline Cain identified master narrative of the movement and compared it to individual narratives some of which revealed deviations from the main narrative¹⁰⁴. Cain's approach resembles collective and individual narratives introduced by Benford. Stories of individuals can indicate elements that reflect collective understanding of a situation.

To summarize with, narrative organizes different aspects and occurrences in human life in a coherent plot where these elements are assigned meanings and the author and other agents are ascribed a position. By the mean of a narrative, people evaluate their experiences and observations, and evaluate and justify inconsistencies in reality and cultural scripts or between them, including transformative events. Therefore, while reading the stories of activists, we can find their way of conceptualization of protest, participation, their role and the image of other characters of the story such as the police.

3.3. Research question and categories of interpretation

In the previous sections it was argued that protest is affected by factors at several levels and the role of the police can be salient in development of action. Particularly, police violence has potential to escalate resistance being at the same time a challenge for participants. Because protest participants' action ultimately depends on their construction of reality, activist knowledge, inquiry into sense-making processes of the activist can provide an explanation of how the police action is related to the tactics and strategies of resistance. Study of narratives offers an opportunity to examine how activists interpret various events and conditions. Therefore the original question of what are the relationships between violent protest policing and nonviolent form of resistance can be reformulated in the following way:

How are the relationships between activist knowledge and nonviolent action represented in narratives of protest participants?

It is not the ambition of this paper to explain the mechanisms of nonviolent action or discover strong causations. Rather, the aim is to explore how participants of nonviolent campaigns comprehend their action and their relationships with the police which are considered to be an important actor on the stage of protest. Studying texts produced by activists gives a chance to induce meaning and relationship rather than to impose theories. Also, while focusing

¹⁰⁴ Catherine Kohler Riessman. *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (CA, USA: SAGE Publications, 2008): 67.

on the activist knowledge concept, we remain alert to other possible crucial aspects in participant's interpretations.

In order to answer the main question, we have to identify various elements of narratives particularly its plot, characters and how they are connected. Consequently, analysis would include the following questions:

How are the characters of the police and protesters depicted in the stories of protesters?

How do the narratives portray nonviolent action?

Does the plot connect elements of activist knowledge and nonviolent action and what are their relationships?

It is expected that examination of narratives would provide us with an answer to the main question by connecting different elements in the plot and evaluation.

Because narrative analysis is normally an inductive type of inquiry, there is no purpose to impose meanings on the texts in advance. However, previously elaborated concepts can help reading and comprehending stories, that is why below we will discuss some of the relevant concepts.

By this time, we have identified two primary ways of looking at narratives from the perspective on the content or plot, or what is being told (that do not exhaust possible alternatives): story of transformation with change as a central topic and stories of justification, focusing on a certain discrepancy. The stories of transformation and justification are, in their turn, penetrated by elements of expectations and positioning, in addition to basic elements such as plot, characters, moral of the story.

When a narrative is understood as a justification, its plot should contain elements relevant to discrepancy, disruption, that is unusual and its explanation is proposed by the storyteller. However, all this processes might not be explicit and, for example, explanation can be concentrated in the evaluative part of the story or in some other part of the plot. Both the discrepancy and justification itself are important for the analysis. For example, police violence can be presented by activists as both a usual, casual event or sudden, unexpected, abnormal, which would considerably shape evaluation of the police action in the stories and relation of protesters' action with respect to it.

Stories, as previously mentioned, also tend to depict transformation, changing of state from one to another, which can be presented as a sequence of equilibrium that are being distorted and then restored by the following action¹⁰⁵. Looking at the stories from this perspective helps

¹⁰⁵ Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research*, 19

distinguish what protesters consider an influential factor that changes the course of action and reveal what storytellers regard a relatively normal or acceptable state of affairs. Thus, a peaceful life of regular Turkish citizens can be disrupted by police intervention or by a phone call from a friend inviting to join a sit-in. This approach also facilitates understanding of a protest as a process where police and protesters' tactics and strategies change while influencing each other.

Studies on narratives of social movements have been successful in discerning various stories and plots that as well embrace the sphere of relationships between police and activists. Categories discovered in previous research have a potential to illuminate aspects of Gezi Park protests and they provide a good basis for orientation in the stories of activists.

For example, Fine outlines several types of narratives, namely horror, war and happy ending stories¹⁰⁶. Horror stories usually explain why a person became a participant and depict hardships he or she had before joining the movements. In war stories author recounts his experience of tough struggle as a participant of the movement. Happy endings, as can be derived from the name, describe positive changes that participation brought or other improvements in their lives. These narratives are essentially stories of transformation and can possibly co-exist in one text. Therefore, Fine's classification can be used for mapping the stories' structure.

Furthermore, Benford identifies several myths represented in collective narratives that are believed to contribute of social movements created in "recursive" relationships with the stories on individual level¹⁰⁷. Some of these myths are relevant to our case too. Firstly, it is a Utopian myth about heroic nonviolent struggle that served as an inspiration for movement participants to adhere to peaceful tactics¹⁰⁸. The power of nonviolence myth is similar to the Utopian myth but placing an accent of civic duties and moral obligation of the citizens¹⁰⁹. Additionally, there is grassroots myth emphasizing the power of bottom-up movement¹¹⁰. Each of these myths can be understood as a framework in which protesters comprehend their own action and other factors. We can employ Benford's ideas to find similar and diverging elements recurring in the narratives of protesters to reveal possible myths in the stories about Gezi Park protests.

¹⁰⁶ Garry Allan Fine, "Public narration and group culture: Discerning discourse in social movements" in *Social Movements and Culture* ed. H. Johnston and B. Klandermans (London: UCL Press, 1995): 135

¹⁰⁷ Benford, "Controlling Narratives and Narratives as Control within Social Movements," 55.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 57

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 58

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 60

Additionally, category of injustice appears both in different plots of social movements and in explanation of collective action dynamics¹¹¹. For this reason, it is important to look at how the concept of injustice is developed in the narratives and how it interacts with other elements of the plot.

The category of victim is the one likely to appear in the narratives of Gezi Park protests' participants and it provides another perspective on the relationships between different characters in the stories. For example, according to Wahlström, resort to violence during demonstration was explained by participants as a refusal of the image of a victim that was not appealing to activists¹¹². However, as we explained above, the image of a victim of injustice can also bring benefits. Moreover, while provocation plots identified by Wahlström were used to justify violence on behalf of protesters, similar plots by nonviolent resistance activists. Victimhood as a part of a narrative can take a different meaning in Gezi Park protest events and can provide an explanation for protesters' tactics and strategies.

To summarize the approach, activist knowledge is expected to be a part of a narrative of participants. Narrative, in its turn, organizes different parts of reality construction and demonstrates relations or absence of them between these elements and may contain explanations or justification of events or actions. This paper seeks to find what kind of activist knowledge is included in the narratives, its content, and how it is connected to actions of protest participants.

¹¹¹ Hess and Martin, "Repression, backfire, and the theory of transformative events", 251; Benford, "Controlling Narratives and Narratives as Control within Social Movements," 54

¹¹² Wahlström, "Taking Control or Losing Control? Activist Narratives of Provocation and Collective Violence", 375

Chapter IV. Research methodology

The purpose of the chapter is to describe research process of this study. First, we will discuss methods of narrative research in general and insights from relevant inquiries. Secondly, we will outline general strategy of the study. Finally, an overview of data and limitations will be presented.

4.1. Narrative research

To begin with, this work is based on the qualitative approach to data collection and analysis which implies corresponding ontological and epistemological assumptions. There is no purpose in discovering mechanisms of social movements and protest, but rather to inquire in how participants comprehend these phenomena. This work has no objective to find the truth, but it does seek to represent meaning-making processes as accurately as possible.

The research process has been organized according to the scheme for case study suggested by David A. Snow and Danny Trom¹¹³, which provides clear guidelines that help organize and structure work in other types of research too.

According to the above-mentioned scheme, at the first stage, researcher should select the case on the basis of certain criteria. Because this study started with an interest in particular happenings, protests in Turkey in 2013, the criteria were employed not to choose, but rather to locate and conceptualize the case among other instances of collective action, protests and nonviolent resistance. This contributed to understanding Gezi Park protests' similarities and differences in comparison to other cases, as well as helped define it in more abstract notions of social sciences.

At the second stage, the researcher familiarizes himself with a sample of available data in order to elaborate first ideas about the object of research. This inquiry's departure point was reflection on information from various sources such as news, social media, and personal discussions about the events. During this stage, notes were taken on recurring topics and striking or unusual events, processes or messages. It was a thought-provocative exercise that provided the initial understanding of the problem, prompted questions, and shaped the topic of research.

¹¹³ David A. Snow and Danny Trom, "The case study and the study of social movements" in *Methods of social movement research*, ed. Bert Klandermans, and Suzanne, Staggenborg, (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2002): 149.

The next step involved scrutiny of literature on the topic and finding concepts and ideas that were relevant to various aspects of the research object in order to elaborate an informed understanding of protest and framework for analysis and interpretation. Results of this work are presented in the chapters 2 and 3 of the thesis, where the research questions are formulated on the basis of discussion on theoretical approaches to the problem and findings of previous empirical studies.

The final stage was essentially answering the questions through analysis of the data. This process is going to be described in more details below in discussion on the narrative analysis.

Narrative inquiry is a method used across disciplines and has absorbed various approaches and traditions. There is no single approach to such analysis and its application depends on the research purposes and stance on the data.

Catherine Riessman proposes a classification of narrative analysis according to the way researchers treat narratives depending on the purpose of their study that includes structural, interactional, performative and thematic analysis¹¹⁴.

Formal or structural analysis emphasizes the form in which the story is told¹¹⁵. In the work of Labov, a classical example of this approach, text is analyzed as a sequence of clauses, where sequence plays a pivotal role in connecting different parts of the narrative, and each clause is assigned a function in the text, such as abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, evaluation and coda¹¹⁶. Application of this model to analysis of stories collected from Gezi participants would pose significant challenges. Firstly, the texts are usually long and elements can be repeated or be absent, which would complicate their examination and make them difficult to comprehend. Secondly, since formal analysis requires an extensive work with language of the story, interpretation becomes highly controversial when the texts are in a foreign language and needs a translation, or when they are written by a foreign language speaker. Therefore, conducting formal analysis in its strict meaning bears a risk of incorrect interpretations stemming from the lack of understanding of speech conventions and large amount of texts.

¹¹⁴ Catherine Kohler Riessman, "Narrative analysis" in *Narrative, Memory and Everyday life* ed. Kelly, Nancy, Horrocks, Christine, Milnes, Kate, Roberts, Brian and Robinson, David (Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield, 2005): 2-5

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 2

¹¹⁶ Hyvärinen, "26. Analyzing narratives and story-telling". 452

Interactional or dialogical analysis focuses on the process of co-creation of meaning by teller and listener and paralinguistic features of their interaction¹¹⁷. This approach can be fruitful for analysis of protesters and police relationships, especially under circumstances when a dialog is technically possible, and participants perform their roles, for example in the courtroom, in the police department or during negotiations. Unfortunately, it was not possible to collect such data due to timing, problems of access in such situations, and language barrier. Same considerations are applicable to performative analysis which relies on stage metaphor¹¹⁸. For this reason, these types of analysis cannot be conducted within framework of this paper, while it can be considered for future studies.

Thematic narrative analysis investigates the content of the stories, what is said, rather than how, and it normally results in distinguishing types of stories¹¹⁹. Researchers use different techniques to work with texts and categories, often relying on preliminary elaboration of theoretical concepts that informs typologization of stories¹²⁰. Theory of narrative and social movements discussed in the previous chapter provided a basis for classification of texts according to the topics. At the same time, types or subtypes of narratives can be inducted from texts in case it is possible to distinguish other criteria in which the stories significantly differ. One of the features and simultaneously a problem of thematic analysis is that context and language that are largely ignored¹²¹. However, it is the researcher's decision of how to treat these aspects in the framework of a particular inquiry. For example, when studying collective action myths, Benford did consider the context and role of the stories in a broader framework¹²².

Thematic analysis is both more feasible to carry out with consideration of available data and offers sufficient instruments for understanding relations between policing and protesters action interpreted in the stories.

Social movements' researchers use various types of narrative analysis and have different foci. For example, in one of her works, Francesca Poletta focuses on the plot of the stories¹²³; study of Wahlström includes discussion of characters, including the police¹²⁴; Fine's work¹²⁵ is

¹¹⁷ Riessman, "Narrative analysis", 4

¹¹⁸ Riessman, "Narrative analysis", 5

¹¹⁹ Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, 53

¹²⁰ Ibid., 54

¹²¹ Ibid., 54

¹²² Benford, "Controlling Narratives and Narratives as Control within Social Movements,"

¹²³ Poletta, "Plotting protest: mobilizing stories in the 1960 student sit-ins ..", 33.

¹²⁴ Wahlström, "Taking Control or Losing Control? Activist Narratives of Provocation and Collective Violence", 374

close to thematic analyses, as was already mentioned. All of these types can be beneficial for this study as well.

While inferring themes and interpretation of narratives is both based on theoretical developments on the subject of study, context, and common sense of the researcher, thematic analysis is also informed by basic propositions on narrative theory¹²⁶. In this paper, analysis of text rests on the assumptions that narratives connect events and action by way of emplotment. For this reason, our approach to stories will focus on characters that are both sources of action and the ones who face the events, as well as development of the plot.

Identification of characters and their role is indispensable for understanding what agents are considered significant by activists and how they perceive their own selves and the police. While the concept of activist knowledge mainly refers to police and activists as possible characters, it is important to consider their relations with other possible figures appearing in the narratives.

Plot is an element of narrative that is not reduced to the sequence of events but rather making the sequence intelligible and meaningful by assigning causal relationships. Adapting the idea of Todorov, Czarniawska suggests an analysis of text as a sequence of equilibrium, its distortion and action taken to restore equilibrium¹²⁷. This sequence can be repeated within one story and is sometimes supplemented by a complicating action. Such an approach can be employed in our study to examine the structure of text and its turning points.

It was mentioned in the previous chapter that narrative is also distinguished from other types of texts by implying evaluation, and this is of utmost interest for this study as well as a conclusion of interpretation process. At the same time, it should be noted that moral of the story is not necessarily a separate part of the text but can be implied in it.

Stages in processing the data

During the first readings, information that was repeating, circulating or was unusual or particularly relevant to the topic of the study was highlighted. This initial stage of working with the data helped understand what are the main themes of the stories, what kind of information the stories reveal and underscore, what are the common elements of different narratives (for example, every story has a passage related to police violence).

¹²⁵ Fine, "Public narration and group culture: Discerning discourse in social movements"

¹²⁶ Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, 57

¹²⁷ Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research*, 19

After most of the data was collected and systematized, each story's text was coded in order to improve comprehension of narratives. Coding was simple and it was based on the elements of narratives and concepts related to protest and activist knowledge. For example, if a sentence described police's actions it was marked accordingly. A table was created for analysis of characters comprised of separate columns for police's and protesters' actions and intentions, emotions, or other relevant descriptions, and synopsis of the story so as not to detach data from narrative itself.

As the next step, we highlighted passages relevant to motivation of participants, happenings and atmosphere for analysis of experience of resistance. Finally, equilibriums and corresponding actions, as well as evaluative passages were coded within the text in order to examine the plots. Special attention was paid to stories that contained alternative evaluation or discussed non-typical details about the protest. Afterwards stories were grouped according to their main theme and explanation of resistance and data from the text was interpreted to answer the research questions.

4.2. Data collection and classification

Narrative analysis can be based on a big variety of texts and even paralinguistic elements. Story is sometimes seen as comprised of several sources. What is considered to be a narrative may vary from life story to talks, depending on the field. Because this thesis focuses on storytelling by participants, the approach to narrative data is relatively narrow. Here, narrative is a text that contains description of participant's experience in Gezi Park protests and meets basic criteria of a story, namely sequence of events and evaluation.

How the data was obtained?

In studies of narratives in social movement research scholars utilized a wide array of types of texts that were obtained in different ways. For example, Benford included analysis of master-classes for participants of campaigns¹²⁸, Poletta focused on interviews¹²⁹ and Wahlström observed conversations on forums¹³⁰. Hence, options for methods of data collection and sources

¹²⁸ Benford, "Controlling Narratives and Narratives as Control within Social Movements," 58

¹²⁹ Poletta, "Plotting protest: mobilizing stories in the 1960 student sit-ins ..", 31

¹³⁰ Wahlström, "Taking Control or Losing Control? Activist Narratives of Provocation and Collective Violence", 373

of data are multiple, but they are limited by the definition of narrative employed in a particular research, topic and sources of data relevant to it, language skills and, sometimes, access to the object of analysis.

In the case of our study, data collection on the protest in a foreign country had its own limitations such as difficulty to be personally present and observe the events, including possible lectures, conversations, discussions, and negotiations; fewer opportunities to meet participants and record their stories; linguistic and cultural considerations.

Since activists' efforts of story-production in the Internet were observed at the very first stages of the study and eventually determined theoretical framework and choice of method, collection of materials available online was a feasible option that had certain advantages. First merit was timing, because it made possible to access stories produced when the protests were still ongoing and therefore such narratives were not as much penetrated by attempts to evaluate protest with respect to its eventual outcomes. Secondly, creation of such narratives was independent of researcher and thus context of research was not imposed on it. Thirdly, stories produced by participants during the events are not simply types of data, but social acts influencing the protest¹³¹.

Data collection process was at first not directed exclusively at potential stories. To familiarize with the protest and the context, it was necessary to analyze various sorts of materials including news, posts in the social media, photo-essays and relevant academic works. The analysis of background of the protest, main events, participants and other aspects was based on these materials, most of which did not comprise data for narrative analysis. For example, time-lines¹³² are not understood as narratives while being extremely informative and in many ways expressing the protesters' perspective on the events.

Also, on the basis of this preliminary work, several possible sources of data were identified:

1. Web-based newspapers and other websites. Despite the silence of government controlled media in Turkey, independent sources did do a lot of work in spreading messages of participants. For example, there is a web-page that contains stories of violence during Gezi Protest¹³³ which is the result of efforts to represent victim's voices. Another web-site was set up for publishing important articles, news, statements and personal accounts in foreign languages,

¹³¹ Davis, "Narratives and Social Movements. The power of stories," 16

¹³² Cassano, Jay. "An interactive timeline of Turkish dissent: one year since Gezi", *Mutfah*, 04.06.2014. <http://mutfah.org/interactive-timeline-turkish-dissent-one-year-since-gezi/#.VWiZYeGY3IU>

¹³³ *Stories of Violence from Turkey*, <http://www.siddethikayeleri.com>

whereby texts were translated by volunteers¹³⁴ The main source of data for this paper was website entirely devoted to protest that contained a great variety of texts including “personal stories”¹³⁵ and “accounts of violence”¹³⁶. Stories were translated and accompanied by a link to the original source, making it easy to assess the origin of the text.

Naturally, it is difficult to expect that they would represent the entire spectrum of stories, especially when the collection was devoted particularly to accounts of violence, and selection is to some extent biased. Nevertheless, because creators of such websites or on-line media were either activists themselves or at least interested and sympathizers of the resistance, it is possible to conclude that their work was as much a part of protest and creation of narratives, as writing a personal account in a private blog. Consequently, we believe that collections of stories from on-line media and websites were not severely distorted and are reliable as data.

2. Blogs. There are several stories that were placed in blogs of people who participated in the protest¹³⁷. Narratives coming from the blogs are some of the most suitable for the analysis, since they contained temporarily organized personal accounts of events in free form unrestricted by an imposed topic or format. The obvious downside was scarcity of such sources, especially in English.

3. Forums. People who live or used to live in Turkey recommended looking for information on the famous Turkish forum Sour Dictionary¹³⁸. Some observations on the entries of the forum resonated with stories collected from other stories, but because forum entries are usually short and very particular, it was difficult to trace a story unfolding. However, there were passages that provided a glimpse at nonviolent action in relevant discussion.

4. Other social media. As mentioned above, the role of social media should not be underestimated as it gave participants communication space and facilitated the protest greatly. However, format of communication on Facebook or Twitter does not usually allow a whole story to be unfolded in a message, but rather a brief comment or a statement. For this reasons, there are very few posts that were used in the analysis.

As it was noted before, there are various texts available that are relevant to the topic, but not all of them can be qualified as a story. Narratives had to be selected on the basis of the

¹³⁴ *Translatingtaksim*, <https://translatingtaksim.wordpress.com/>

¹³⁵ Personal Stories, *Everywhere Taksim*, <https://everywheretaksim.net/category/texts/personal-stories/>

¹³⁶ Account of Violence, *Everywhere Taksim*, <https://everywheretaksim.net/category/texts/accounts-of-violence/>

¹³⁷ *Sinefil. A Blog of (extremely) short film reviews. And other things.* (blog). <http://sinefilmelisb.blogspot.fi/>

¹³⁸ *Ekşi Sözlük*, <https://eksisozluk.com/>

following criteria: it had to contain experience of participation and the author or protagonist had to be a participant him or herself; the structure had to contain elements of the plot – sequence of events and evaluation or moral of the story. Originally, it was expected that suitable stories would contain an episode of encounter with the police, but in order to make selection less biased this criterion was lifted. Eventually, every narrative did contain description of interaction with the police, but it was not the result of applying certain conditions to the stories but rather reflected the place of the police in resistance. Preferable length of the story was about one page, but many of them were significantly longer, and shorter texts were included in case they met criteria for structure and content.

Because stories were collected from different sources, they also vary greatly in their shape and structure. Main forms of presentations were reports, diaries, reflections, interviews. Reports are stories that contained a detailed account of events, actions and other aspects of protests, which is similar to news reports but their author and purpose are rather different.

A subtype of this stories was a diary, the above mentioned blog where author wrote on a daily basis, both providing description and analysis of events. Its form, which is similar to both chronology and a story, prompted a question of how different entries should be treated – as separate narrative or one narrative. The structure of each entry sufficed criteria of a story, but since it had the same author and recurring elements, it was decided to analyze it as one narrative with consideration of how different events were evaluated by the author.

Other group of stories is reflections on the protests, which, in contrast to reports, tended to focus more on the evaluation of events, rather than providing details.

Finally, some interviews were included in the data as well, even though they had a different structure. As noted by Czarniawska, researcher can treat the whole interview as a narrative or elucidate narrative of the interviewee from the text¹³⁹. Our approach was differential, depending on the form of the content. Because interviews were conducted by activists or sympathizers of events whose purpose was to contribute to the resistance, they could be considered a conversation that is itself a narrative. At the same time, some interviews contained relevant stories in some of the answers and these passages were further treated as narratives.

As a result, around 45 stories were collected occupying around 120 pages.

¹³⁹ Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research*, 55

4.3. Considerations and limitations

Any type of analysis requires reflection on possible factors that affect research process and undermine validity of results.

Some of the most crucial considerations concern empirical data. It is important to be aware of advantages and disadvantages of the data collection method, sources and data itself. First of all, stories might not reveal all the aspects of protests that are required for answering the research questions. Narrative interviews allow researcher to guide the interviewee and ask more focused questions, and, consequently, collect sufficient data. At the same time, if the stories are told in a more natural environment rather than an interview, the author has the freedom to punctuate aspects that are more important for him or her. Also, especially in the case of social movements, stories are interconnected with action, while a story that was told at an interview can only be considered an account or explanation. However, an interview or a conversation can be used for validation of results.

One should also anticipate absence of elements that seem important for the analysis. This problem can be overridden by a separate discussion of why those elements, which can provide more insights on the topic of research. For example, in her study on the movement in the US, Francesca Poletta notes that analyzed stories described many actions as spontaneous and did not mentioned that campaigns did have a preparatory works behind them¹⁴⁰. It is therefore important to be aware of events that actually took place while working with relevant narratives since emphasis on a certain event or its exclusion from the text, its representation or placement in the story can tell a lot about its meaning for the storyteller.

There is also a possibility of narratives being rather biased by their attitudes to the government and the police, experiences, or motivation to participate in the process. This aspect can be problematic in some studies, but because the purpose of narrative analysis in this thesis is to understand personal interpretations of participants, such biases are not going to affect the results.

Language skills are another concern in this study. Collected data primarily consists of texts that were written in English by an author to whom English is not a native language or texts that were translated to English from Turkish. While it does pose questions on how accurately these texts represent the author's story, this cannot be considered a significant disadvantage in

¹⁴⁰ Poletta , “Plotting protest: mobilizing stories in the 1960 student sit-ins ..”, 38.

this paper, because it does not employ post-structuralism and structuralism techniques where linguistic aspects gain primary importance.

It is also a complicated question of how many stories are enough. On the one hand, this is a qualitative study and it does not claim to reveal trends of the social movement or display causal relationships in the processes of resistance. At the same time, it is expected that collected stories do express views that are to some extent shared by the participant and have a potential to explain their actions too. This dilemma is resolved here through another constrain - the limited amount of available stories that suit the criteria. For this reason the focus is placed on the quality and thickness not the quantity of narratives.

Chapter V. Narrative analysis

This chapter's purpose is to present an analysis of narratives produced by the participants of Gezi Park protest on the subject of relations between nonviolent form of resistance and violent protest policing. The results will be discussed according to the following plan: stories' characters; conceptualization of resistance; main themes of the narratives. In the final section, results of inquiry in the texts will be discussed against theoretical concept of activist knowledge in order to provide answers for our research question.

5.1. Police and protesters

Characters are one of the basic elements of any narrative. Gezi Park protests' stories revolve around a limited number of expected characters – activists themselves, the police, and, to a lesser extent, other figures such as other activists or representatives of the government. We will first introduce the police in order to make presentation of the protesters' perception of their own selves smoother because it has multiple connections to the image of the former ones.

Actions of the police received a lot of attention in the narratives, as lengthy pieces of texts are devoted to interaction between them and protesters and its consequences.

To begin with, stories offer a detailed depiction of how the police utilized different sorts of techniques for dispersion of protesters – tear gas, water cannons, detentions, and even guns loaded with plastic bullets. Obviously, the police have the right, and sometimes an obligation, to use a wide range of means on certain occasions. However, because these means were applied excessively and in a particular context, they were quickly perceived to be more than attempts to control the crowd and maintain public order. Stories scream of police brutality portrayed by both police actions and its consequences in human suffering, especially the stories written to share exactly this experience.

Soon polices' arsenal became a part of resisters' everyday vocabulary and penetrated every story in various ways, including the metaphors. An informed reader does not need additional comments to understand what the source of “shower of gas canisters”¹⁴¹ is. It is clear that the police started an intervention at that moment.

¹⁴¹ Deniz Erkmen, “Resist Istanbul: Or how I got teargassed again and started losing hope that this government will ever stop the violence,” *Blog of Defne Suman*, 12.06.2013. <http://defnesumanblogs.com/2013/06/12/resist-istanbul-or-how-i-got-teargassed-again-and-started-losing-hope-that-this-government-will-ever-stop-the-violence/>

This is not only the severity of injuries received by activists that illustrates brutality of the police. While some stories speak only of various actions undertaken against protesters, others additionally describe intentions and emotions of the police that the author observed. Such details appear more frequently in the narratives of people who had a more direct contact with the police forces, especially if the author was detained or beaten by the police. An activist, who was detained when she was on duty as medical personnel, says: “*I treat them as patients but they see me as enemy*”¹⁴². The police are regarded hostile with varying degrees, and lacking empathy, and treating protesters like a “Greek army”¹⁴³ (supposedly, the worst enemy of Turkey).

Moreover, the police are sometimes seen as intending regrettable consequences for the activists and even enjoying it.¹⁴⁴ For example in this passage author provides a description of the intentions of the police as well as their possible motivation behind the intentions: “*In this fight we didn’t get tired but apparently the police were exhausted because that night they attacked with the aim of finishing us off*”¹⁴⁵. This short excerpt represents a relatively shared belief that the policemen forced to work exhaustively to disperse protest by the authorities were put in unbearable working conditions and were extremely tired, which motivated them to ‘finish’ the task. In the police’s view, according to the narratives, it would mean applying more force to discourage protesters from continuing.

Notably, while the police are described as hostile and angry, protesters do not use such vocabulary to define their opponent. Despite all the striking portrayals of suffering victims and “mad police”¹⁴⁶ willing to kill them, activists do not directly apply the word “enemy” to them.

The police in the stories are presented as rather non-cooperative, as there are no references to attempts to negotiate with protesters, or, at times, even to warn them about an attack, which reinforces the mean character of action of the police in the stories. As one of the participants recalls: «*Nobody heard any announcements neighbor, just as nobody left the park. The moment the tear gas hit them, they were in the middle of their bites, their words, their*

¹⁴² Bulut Birkan, “Evrensel: Torture with sugar to diabetic patient under custody!” , *Everywhere Taksim*, 21.08.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/evrensel-torture-with-sugar-to-diabetic-patient-under-custody/>

¹⁴³ “Ekşi Sözlük, “I apologize to you, my Kurdish brother, my Kurdish Sister”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 14.06.2013 <http://everywheretaksim.net/i-apologize-to-you-my-kurdish-brother-my-kurdish-sister/>

¹⁴⁴ “Letter from Taksim — 4”, *Translating Taksim*, 08.06.2013, <https://translatingtaksim.wordpress.com/2013/06/08/letter-from-taksim-4/>

¹⁴⁵ Cankiz, “Turkey Account of Violence: ‘The ones who are weak are not the women, but the ones who perceive us as weak!’”

¹⁴⁶ Uygur Selcuk, «The marginal chappuler in the video images of the Dolmabahçe police violence: «Why was I the last man down?», *Everywhere Taksim*, 04.07.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/the-marginal-chappuler-in-the-video-images-of-the-dolmabahce-police-violence-why-was-i-the-last-man-down-selcuk-uygur/>

dancing»¹⁴⁷. While these lines were written in order to expose another lie of the officials about the polices' operation in the park, it also underscores the absence of communication between police and protesters and lack of observation of some basic conventions of maintaining public order by the former ones. Also, protesters believe the police was angry, when protesters succeed in something¹⁴⁸.

The qualities of the police assigned to them by the protesters make them a perfect antagonist of the story. Similarly to Wahlström's observations¹⁴⁹, police typically performs the role of perpetrator which implies that it inflicts pain and suffering upon protagonists, who are normally protesters but can be as well bystanders or an unsuspecting passerby. The police is stripped off its legitimate duty – to maintain public order and insure safety, because in the situation of protest “it is safe, when there is no police”¹⁵⁰.

At the same time, the police is presented as an opponent – somebody with which protesters compete, for example in “how well they know the city”.¹⁵¹ The police at the same time is caught “celebrating the victory”¹⁵², when they manage to disperse protesters.

Remarkably, while the portrayals of episodes of police violence are detailed and compelling, emphasizing the brutality and injustice, the style of coping with protest is at times normalized in separate stories or in one narrative. Activists are not surprised by tear gas anymore¹⁵³ and description of clashes sound like a regular part of participation in protest. «*A handsome TOMA welcomed me on Plevne Street*»¹⁵⁴ - tells an activist from Izmir in an ironic and humorous way. This is not to say, that the violence became normal and acceptable, but it was certainly expected. And, of course this development does not concern all the stories, especially

¹⁴⁷ Defne Suman, «Come on neighbor, please wake up!», *Blog of Defne Suman*, 17.06.2013. <http://defnesumanblogs.com/2013/06/17/come-on-neighbor-please-wake-up/>

¹⁴⁸ Selcuk, “The marginal chappuler in the video images of the Dolmabahçe police violence”

¹⁴⁹ Wahlström, “Taking control or losing control?": 375.

¹⁵⁰ Melis B. «Living in Taksim – Weekend Report June 8-9, 2013», *Sinefil. Blog a blog of (extremely) short film reviews. and other things.* 09.06.2013. http://sinefilmelisb.blogspot.fi/2013/06/living-in-taksim-weekend-report-june-8_9.html

¹⁵¹ Öztan, Güven Gürkan “Being a “student” in Gezi resistance”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 03.08.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/bianet-being-a-student-in-gezi-resistance/>

¹⁵² “Now Everybody Has a Story”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 16.06.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/now-everybody-has-a-story/>

¹⁵³ Ege Dündar, “BirGün: My neighborhood razed to the ground”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 08.09.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/birgun-my-neighborhood-razed-to-the-ground-ege-dundar/>

¹⁵⁴ Gamze Kultukaya, “Here it was going on, in İzmir and right now”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 10.08.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/bianet-here-it-was-going-on-in-izmir-and-right-now/>

because some of the authors faced much more extreme treatment which is difficult to come to terms with.

Another important aspect of perception of the police is its relationships with the state. Clearly, the police do not act on the basis of their autonomous decisions and their behavior is coordinated by the government if not fully subordinated to it, and Turkey is not exclusion. Already from the beginning there was a shared understanding that brutal policing shows the attitude of the government to activists. Furthermore, protesters quickly realized that it is not only the excessive use of force in the streets that comprised oppression they were met with. It was silence of the mass media leaving the country mis- or under-informed¹⁵⁵, neglectful attitude of the Prime Minister and other high-ranked official as well as their attempts to impose a different reading of the events¹⁵⁶; pressure and attacks on lawyers¹⁵⁷ and medics¹⁵⁸ who gave their hand to the activists.

If the source of oppression is ultimately deemed to be the most powerful official in the country, the Prime Minister, who impersonates grievances caused by changes in various policies, are the police actions perceived as only as executing his orders? The stories, naturally, admit the connection. However, police's agency is not absolutely subsumed under the institutional repression, because the police are portrayed as possessing their own feelings, intentions and, eventually, choices. They are violent not only because this is how they are ordered to act, but because they wish it. On the contrary, some of the policemen are friendly¹⁵⁹ or show mercy¹⁶⁰. Therefore, situational repression is not perceived only as a part of the structural repression by Gezi Park protesters, but acquires its own place and meaning in their stories.

Now we will discuss how do participants construct the image of their own selves as protagonists. The first striking feature of stories is their appeal to the innocence of protesters. Participants were urged to defy the stigmas of “looters” and “marginal” ascribed to them by the

155 Deniz Erkmen «Resist Istanbul: A personal story», Blog of Defne Suman, 07.06.2013. Retrieved from <http://defnesumanblogs.com/2013/06/07/resist-istanbul-a-personal-story/>

156 Melis B. “Living in Taksim – Weekend Report June 8-9, 2013”

157 Defne Suman, “What is happening in Istanbul?” Blog of Defne Suman, 01.06.2013. Retrieved from <http://defnesumanblogs.com/2013/06/01/what-is-happening-in-istanbul/>

158 Zeynep Talay, “The ongoing Turkish protests have left us enlightened and emboldened”, *The Guardian*, 20.07.2013. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jul/20/turkish-protests-enlightened-emboldened>

159 “Letter from Taksim — 4”

160 Selcuk, “The marginal chappuler in the video images of the Dolmabahçe police violence”

officials and mass-media and insist that have not done anything illegal or morally unacceptable and did not have such intentions¹⁶¹.

Furthermore, protesters tend to claim to be usual people who do not belong to any particular group and represent common interest, *“including all types of people: students, artists, actors and actresses, doctors, lawyers, housewives, elders, youngsters, poor, rich, educated, uneducated, religious, non-religious, atheists, gays and lesbians, environmentalists, democrats, republicans and even conservatives.”*¹⁶² Another activist addresses her neighbor emphasizing that he or she knows and sees the people who are now in the streets:

*“Surely, you know my students, they’re the ones who always come and go to my place. They speak in low tones, kind young women with bright eyes. Got it, right? Yes, exactly. It was them who set up their tents in the park.”*¹⁶³

In doing so, the author tries to establish the image of protesters who are just some of the regular citizens, just like her neighbor, without particular deviations and, hence, not marginal.

As it could be expected, the protagonist often becomes a victim of disproportionate use of force or verbal and physical abuse. The image of the situation becomes growingly absurd when it is revealed that the victims of police violence “did not even protest”¹⁶⁴. Hence, activists, according to their own accounts, are not the threat and not criminals but still have to endure mistreatment by the authorities. Police serves as a more visible and bright example of such mistreatment. Its actions are consequently rendered illegitimate because their target did not 'deserve' such attitude.

Portrayal of police is connected to the justification of the protest as a moral outrage. Actions undertaken against the injustice are perceived legitimate, while the behavior of the police has opposite characteristics. To create the sense of legitimacy, authors do not only stress the volume of brutality of the security forces, but thoroughly develop their own image too. Some of the participants claim that “nobody deserves such a treatment”¹⁶⁵, but it is normally underscored in addition to elaboration of the peaceful attitude of protesters. Consequently, legitimization of protest required both elements – protesters' innocent image and injustice they

161“Ekşi Sözlük, *“I apologize to you, my Kurdish brother, my Kurdish Sister”*; Selcuk, “The marginal chappuler in the video images of the Dolmabahçe police violence”; Erkmen, “Resist Istanbul: Or how I got teargassed again.”

162Serap Ertüzü, “A word from Istanbul, Turkey”, *Blog of Defne Suman*, 14.06.2013. Retrieved from <http://defnesumanblogs.com/2013/06/14/a-word-from-istanbul-turkey-by-serap-ertuzun/>

163 Su man, «Come on neighbor, please wake up!»,

164 Erkmen, “Resist Istanbul: Or how I got teargassed again”

165 Erkmen, “Resist Istanbul: Or how I got teargassed again”

suffer. This observation leads to the idea that in order to be able to maintain legitimacy further, participants have to demonstrate consistency in their peaceful attitude in their claims and actions.

5.2. Resistance

Just as in the social sciences literature protest campaign may have different names depending on the disciplines and own characteristics, Gezi events in Turkey were labeled as revolution, riot, and uprising by different sources. Nevertheless, the notion of resistance as one of the most common self-definitions was met across the narratives in slogans (“*The skies of Ankara are rumbling with the slogan: “Everywhere is Taksim, everywhere is resistance!”*”¹⁶⁶), calls for actions, evaluation and description of the happenings. For example, hash tag #direngezi was one of the most recognizable and frequent in social networks and other Internet services to refer to the protests. For this reason, a closer examination of concept of resistance developed in the narratives has the potential to guide us through different aspects relevant to the protest.

What was the resistance against? Of course, there were multiple reasons for joining the protest described by storytellers. First, a small group of people stood against demolition of the Gezi Park, literally protecting the trees with their bodies, but after they were violently attacked it caused already discussed mechanisms of moral outrage to prompt other citizens to show their support¹⁶⁷. With increasing awareness and dissatisfaction with government's action the snowball of grievances started to grow, and activists found various reasons to participate from solidarity to economic disadvantages, from restrictive policies concerning lifestyles to discrimination of minorities and LGBT community.

But what stories slowly reveal or openly demonstrate, is that people in the street, banging pots on their balconies and actively sharing news on the Internet wanted to “make their voices heard”¹⁶⁸. And when the government launched oppression together with extremely brutal policing in order to quell protest, the voices had to become even stronger which lead to escalation of the protests. Therefore, it is as much resistance to the assault on the citizen's right,

¹⁶⁶ Füsün Çiçekoğlu, “These feet do not want to go back home, sister!”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 14.06.2013 <http://everywheretaksim.net/these-feet-do-not-want-to-go-back-home-sister/>

¹⁶⁷ Dönmez, “No Doubt, These Kids Know Things,” *Everywhere Taksim*, 03.08.2013 <http://everywheretaksim.net/no-doubt-these-kids-know-things-irem-donmez/>

¹⁶⁸ Dönmez, “No Doubt, These Kids Know Things,”; Erkmen, “Resist Istanbul: Or how I got teargassed again”; Meltem Arikan, “Meltem Arikan on Gezi Park: “What had happened to turn all this into a war zone?”, *Index on Censorship*, 22.01.2014, <http://www.indexoncensorship.org/2014/01/meltem-arikan-mi-minor-gezi-park-gezi-park-mi-minor/>

as it is against actions of the government in particular spheres. It was not only despite repressive measures that activists continued the protest but it was against those measures.

This aspect is even more visible in descriptions of clashes between police and protesters as well as humorous and artistic artifacts and acts. Police-protesters struggle did not only occupy a significant place in the stories, it was also reflected in posters, slogans, jokes, photos and performances. Gamze describes one day she was going to the location of protest:

*"I made friends in a couple of days and I was going to work during the day and hurrying to go to Alsancak straight after work. The jokes like, we are all Tyler Durden, were all around. Meanwhile, I prepared my own activist bag. My gas masks (with extras to give to others if needed), my liquid talcid and water spray, napkins, drinking water, paper and markers (what if I suddenly want to make a placard)..."*¹⁶⁹

Evidently, some of the main symbols of resistance – accessories of protesters¹⁷⁰ - are essentially the means to cope with police's means of dispersion. "Everyone had a story"¹⁷¹ about learning how to cope with tear gas or run from the police. Paradoxically, protest was a citizens' exercise of their rights, but it is at the same time depicted as an action to defend those rights disrespected by the government and the police. Consequently, it appears that resistance was essentially against the attempt to limit the rights of the citizens by suppressing protest.

Against whom? As it was discussed in the previous section, protesters were well aware of the police being ordered to act brutally by someone occupying a higher position, and one of the main targets of protest was back then Prime Minister Erdogan, as the person behind the violent physical attacks, mistreatment, distortion of the work of lawyers and medical personnel, as well as undesirable projects and reforms¹⁷². If not all the stories, then many of them mention this name especially when evaluating the protest in a broader framework than a singular event. One of the participant's diaries repeats a circle when every day after describing of what happened during protests or in the camp in the park, the author analyses what had been said by the Prime Minister or what he has done¹⁷³. Also, a socialist activist promised that the ones who deem to have control are going to be "surprised" by the protesters continuing the campaign, whereby

¹⁶⁹ Kultukaya, "Here it was going on, in İzmir and right now"

¹⁷⁰ "Interview #4-2-1: Istanbul summer accessories", *No Rethorike*, 02.07.2013. <http://norhetorike.com/2013/07/02/interview-4-2-1-istanbul-summer-accessories-2013/>

¹⁷¹ Now Everybody Has a Story», *Everywhere Taksim*

¹⁷² Erkmen, "Resist Istanbul: Or how I got teargassed again"; Melis B. «Living in Taksim»

¹⁷³ Melis B. "Living in Taksim – Report, June 12-14, 2013" *Sinefil. A Blog of (extremely) short film reviews. And other things*, 17.06.2013. <http://sinefilmelisl.b.blogspot.fi/2013/06/living-in-taksim-report-june-12-14-2013.html>

“they” most probably refers to the government with Prime Minister as the main addressee¹⁷⁴. Undoubtedly, the Prime Minister and other officials who openly participated in oppression were seen as the opponents of protesters.

In the previous section we have concluded that protesters demonstrate differentiation between institutional and situational repression, and police is believed to have its own intentions, emotions and choices. It is a controversial topic, because while the police are often blamed for excessive use of force and protests are sometimes framed as a dissent against police violence, activists also tend to divide responsibility for suffering of participants between the police, as an executor, and the government, which is assumed to be ordering police to act violently. Nonetheless, some stories tend to focus on the police as a sole perpetrator.

These are primarily the police forces that protesters encounter face to face and with whom they have to struggle physically, for example, for preserving their location of protest, preventing the police from demolishing the site of resistance and even “not letting them to massacre protesters”¹⁷⁵. Hence, the campaign involved direct resistance to the police action aiming at dispersion of protest and, at the same time, it was resistance to the government. While no univocal answer can be given, we will assume that this was resistance against both the government and the police that are simultaneously separate and tightly interrelated.

How was resistance performed? Participants rarely specify what they are exactly doing as a part of resistance, and then it would practically embrace all the actions undertaken against police and government's repression. The first obvious site of the protest is the streets, and other locations of campaign include virtual space of Internet as well as legal institutions such as courts. Resistance involved spreading information about the happenings in Turkey inside the country and abroad, by sharing and translating news, observations, and testimonies. “I can only write”¹⁷⁶, as explained some of the authors. Another way was collecting information about injustices done to protesters and defending their rights which resulted in a series of stories about police violence that will be discussed later.

While these two aspects were an indispensable part of the protest, the main site was arguably in the street and squares of various cities around Turkey. Physical presence acquired importance as a sign of continuing resistance, which was symbolized by the famous “standing

¹⁷⁴ Yıldız Tar, “Etha: She has been subjected to torture while her rib was fractured!”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 03.08.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/etha-she-has-been-subjected-to-torture-while-her-rib-was-fractured/>

¹⁷⁵ Selcuk, “The marginal chappuler in the video images of the Dolmabahçe police violence”

¹⁷⁶ Suman, «What is happening in Istanbul?»

man”¹⁷⁷. To resist was, in the first place, to come and join the gatherings and marches (which is not to claim that struggle by means of communication and in the courthouses was not significant) and continuing the action despite heavy repression, as demonstration of capability to exercise the right to collectively show disagreement¹⁷⁸.

Resistance, therefore, involved forms of protest that would show the presence of activists through different forms of gatherings such as marches, occupation of public spaces, and organizing forums. But this strategy also inevitably involved encounters with the police, which turned the events to the struggle for the physical space. One of the participants describes the first days of protest in Istanbul, when activists expelled from the park by the police tried to re-enter it, the following way:

*“Being united as a single body, we pushed for the Square tens of times and each time we were pushed back with pressurized water and tear gas. However, nobody was giving up; on the contrary, the crowd was still growing, while the people were becoming more persistent and their anger was increasing. The police wanted to intimidate the people with stun grenades while the people were making an unbelievable noise by hitting pull-down shutters. The crowd meant to say ‘we are not afraid; you should respect our determination and solidarity, and hence you should step back’”*¹⁷⁹

Sometimes, resistance would mean literally standing in from of policemen in order not to let them pass or pushing their way forward despite the police. Some would name it as a passive resistance – there was no attack, rather demonstration of disobedience, “just standing, doing nothing”.¹⁸⁰

Attacks on the police, that were relatively rare and definitely not comparable to the brutality of the policemen, are normally framed as provocations of the policemen in disguise or radicals who are “a part of resistance too”¹⁸¹. More rarely, violence on behalf of protesters is explained as an attempt to “defend”¹⁸² them. Consequently, participants of protest tend to estrange from actions that do not fit in the frame of peaceful protest. Violent action on behalf of protesters is condemned in the narratives and, more rarely, is explained as an attempt to save one's life.

¹⁷⁷ Genc, “The standing man of Taksim Square: a latterday Bartleby”

¹⁷⁸ Selcuk, “The marginal chappuler in the video images of the Dolmabahçe police violence”; “Letter from Taksim – 2”, *Translating Taksim*, 04.06.2013. <https://translatingtaksim.wordpress.com/2013/06/04/letter-from-taksim-2/>

¹⁷⁹ Öztan, “Being a “student” in Gezi resistance”

¹⁸⁰ “Letter from Taksim – 2”

¹⁸¹ Kultukaya, “Here it was going on, in İzmir and right now”

¹⁸² Çevik Cankiz, “Şiddet Öyküleri: ‘I am looking for the witnesses of the police violence I was subjected to’”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 27.07.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/siddet-oykuleri-i-am-looking-for-the-witnesses-of-the-police-violence-i-was-subjected-to/>; Selcuk, “The marginal chappuler in the video images of the Dolmabahçe police violence”

Although, a solid share of the plots is developed around the struggle with the police, resistance had another side which was underscored throughout the stories as a “utopia”¹⁸³. The atmosphere of violence and brutality possessing police and protesters interaction is persistently contrasted to the inner atmosphere of protest, filled with joy, excitement, hope and happiness¹⁸⁴. Participants’ stories depict unheard pluralism and respect for opinions and differences among activists, as well as unexpected kindness, politeness and care, uncommon in Turkey, especially in the huge city of Istanbul¹⁸⁵. Cooperation and solidarity¹⁸⁶ became the basis of interaction during the protest events, creating a community (or, a “commune”¹⁸⁷), where people could practice a new form of life – free of violence and full of peace. They also demonstrated the ability to obey collectively adopted rules without police control¹⁸⁸.

As a result, resistance is depicted as a peaceful action both internally and externally. Interaction with police forces did not involve violent action on behalf of the activist. Model of relationships within the protest was not less important for the self-definition of participants and their action: they are portrayed as good people, kind and caring. Therefore, while the word “nonviolence” is largely not used by the authors, it is difficult to disagree that narrative of the movements punctuates nonviolence as the main property of the resistance¹⁸⁹. Those who were breaking the rules of nonviolent discipline including provocative slogans were eventually condemned and participants tried to distance themselves from “provocateurs”.

Narratives celebrate self-organization of protesters but the mechanisms of organization are largely unrevealed¹⁹⁰. While mobilization was clearly happening via small affinity groups and social media, it is not detailed how such complicated actions on the ground as setting up an infirmary for the wounded or building a barricade was carried out. Participants are normally positioned as newcomers who were learning how to resist in the course of events, while the role

¹⁸³ Melis B. «Living in Taksim»; Erkmen «Resist Istanbul: A personal story»

¹⁸⁴ Öztan, “Being a “student” in Gezi resistance”; Erkmen “Resist Istanbul: A personal story”; “Letter from Taksim – 3”, *Translating Taksim*, 06.06.2013. <https://translatingtaksim.wordpress.com/2013/06/06/letter-from-taksim-3/>;

¹⁸⁵ Melis B. “Living in Taksim - Daily Report. June 4, 2013” *Sinefil. A Blog of (extremely) short film reviews. And other things*, 06.06.2013. <http://sinefilmelisb.blogspot.fi/2013/06/living-in-taksim-daily-report-june-4.html>

¹⁸⁶ Tevfik Uyar, “Such Solidarity Can Even Eliminate an Alien Invasion,” *Everywhere Taksim*, 12.06.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/such-solidarity-can-even-eliminate-an-alien-invasion/>

¹⁸⁷ Öztan, “Being a “student” in Gezi resistance”; Erkmen “Resist Istanbul: A personal story”; “Letter from Taksim – 3”, *Translating Taksim*, 06.06.2013. <https://translatingtaksim.wordpress.com/2013/06/06/letter-from-taksim-3/>;

¹⁸⁸ Melis B. “Living in Taksim - Daily Report. June 5, 2013” *Sinefil. A Blog of (extremely) short film reviews. And other things*, 06.06.2013. <http://sinefilmelisb.blogspot.fi/2013/06/living-in-taksim-daily-report-june-5.html>

¹⁸⁹ İbikoğlu, “Gezi protest in Turkey: A war of narratives?”

¹⁹⁰ “This is Just The Beginnning, We haven’t been Defeated Yet!” *Everywhere Taksim*, 14.06.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/this-is-just-the-beginnning-we-havent-been-defeated-yet/>

of experienced activists, except for Carsi fan group, remains underreported¹⁹¹. Perhaps, the contribution of trained or experienced protesters was not mentioned in order to avoid association with any particular previous movement or personality. At the same time, it could help maintain the image of a spontaneous resistance led by usual people that have common goals with other citizens and common experience.

In the end, reader imagines a spontaneous, independent and leaderless action not owned by anybody but representing all kinds of citizens. Nonviolence this way is portrayed as a characteristic of participants and the resistance that is reproduced in their interaction between each other and the police, without enforcement. At the same time there are references to “passive”¹⁹² resistance as a way to unmask the attitude of the police and the government whose methods of coping with the protest severely contrast what behavior of the activist, laying bare the lack of necessity for a brutal action of the authorities and its injustice.

5.3. Plots of protest

This section explores how various elements of the stories – characters, events and action – are organized in a plot by being assigned meanings and relations to one another. There are a number of techniques to approach the plots focusing of how the story is told or what is told. Considering that the purposes of the study is not to reveal particular verbal techniques which authors use in constructing the narrative, and considerable linguistic difficulties of working with translations from foreign languages, story-grammar analysis is left behind the framework of this paper. Rather, the plot is imagined as equilibrium or a series of equilibriums or distorted and then restored by the action¹⁹³. Additionally, main topic or themes of the stories will be considered and included in the typology.

To begin with, narratives can be grouped as accounts of violence and (other) stories of resistance. The basis for such definitions is two-fold – the position of the narrative in the information structure of the source where it was placed and central topic. Observation on the content of several web pages evokes the idea about important place of accounts of violence in the information field of the Gezi Park protest campaign. For example, they are allocated a separate section among other topics and some of the newspapers purposefully carried out a collection of such stories.

¹⁹¹ Rüzgar Akhat, “Gezi: Losing the Fear, Living the Dream”, , 07.01.2014, Retrieved From [Http://roarmag.org/2014/01/gezi-reflections-protest-forum/](http://roarmag.org/2014/01/gezi-reflections-protest-forum/)

¹⁹² Kultukaya, “Here it was going on, in İzmir and right now”

¹⁹³ Czarniawska, 19

Accounts of violence have a relatively similar structure. The author typically describes an encounter with the police, what precedes and follows it. Police brutality and its regretful consequences, such as an injury, detention or other type of physical or moral suffering, are usually the main topic of stories. Other narratives also contain descriptions of police's action but these are woven in the text among other issues, such as an experience of peaceful encampment or discussion on the reasons or consequences of protests.

Thematically, accounts of violence can be divided into two subgroups – stories of injustice and stories of empowerment.

Stories of injustice essentially focus on depiction of an encounter with the police during the protest that entailed uncalled consequence for the activist or, in some cases, for a person that did not even participate in resistance. The narration typically starts with an introduction of a person or the setting or both, establishing already discussed innocence of the person who was either busy with casual things or tried to escape direct confrontation with the police if the case took place in the midst of protest. Therefore, equilibrium of the story can be found both in an episode of everyday life and the state of resistance.

The scene changes drastically when the police appears and attacks the author or a group of people where the author belongs to:

“We were a few people and the only thing we did till 12 pm was to sit on the grass, then we were cold and found a small group of people who were sitting around a fire. We got warm by their fire and then left .Everything happened after this. Police started to throw tear gas and it was impossible to see beyond our noses after a while.”¹⁹⁴

Police actions disrupt the equilibrium whether it was a surprise for protesters or was expected.

Alternatively, appearance of the police can be described first and then the author would underscore that no wrongdoing was than on behalf of the victim, such as in this passage:

“On 2 June 2013, around 02:00 am, at Gündoğdu the police and some other unidentified people assaulted my son and daughter in law, subjecting them to serious physical and psychological harm. My children, whose only crime was to sit down at Gundogdu, were beaten with sticks and some other object, probably a stick with nails”¹⁹⁵

According to the flaw of narrative, disrupted equilibrium has to be restored, but the author is often portrayed as helpless in the face of authorities, not being able to defend him and establish justice. Sometimes, the author does appeal to the audience, perpetrator or the

¹⁹⁴ “Story of Basak”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 05.06.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/story-of-basak/>

¹⁹⁵ “Do not hit my wife”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 05.06.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/do-not-hit-my-wife/>

responsible ones, trying to assert his or her intention to seek for justice. The victim has to deal with the consequences of police violence and the story, therefore, is not finished at the time of storytelling: *“There are proofs and witnesses that I was beaten up both by police and people who were not from police department. I leave the rest to the justice”*¹⁹⁶.

Stories of empowerment resemble the previous type in many aspects and contain most of the elements such as unjust treatment, but they include a different evaluation of happenings. For example, there are passages where victims of police violence express no resentment about participation (*“I never said to myself, I wish I hadn’t gone. Never.”*¹⁹⁷) and assert that despite police attacks it was a good or useful experience. Additionally, in a conversation with a victim, the interviewer could emphasize the calm behavior or positive attitude of the participant (*“...with a smile on his face”, “says calmly”*)¹⁹⁸.

Moreover, such stories reflect victim’s will to continue protest. A young man, who experienced police violent attempts to disperse protesters, bravely asserts:

*“Police brutality doesn’t surprise me anymore, because lately we have been exposed to it continuously. In a protest at Cebeci right after the Reyhanli bombings, a friend got shot in the head by a teargas canister. Police persistently kept tear gassing a protester who got hit by a car. Despite what the police think, the physical and psychological assaults of the Police have made us even more undaunted in terms of resisting.”*¹⁹⁹

Thereby, he does not only states that he was not deterred by his experience, but he underscores that he became even more convinced and prepared to continue the protest. This transformation of a character of a protagonist is typical for many stories, which will be discussed later in the section.

Another girl recalls her participation experience in Ankara by first introducing her story of being beaten up by the police while having a meal in a cafe, underscoring that it was outside the protest area and she acted as a usual citizens. Further, she concludes by claiming her participation to be valuable:

We were happy although it was impossible to breath and to look around because of the gas firing and people were getting injured all the time...Many forums, meetings taking place at various parks show

¹⁹⁶ “Story of Basak”

¹⁹⁷ Aslan Renging. “BBC Turkish: ‘Okan Gozer’ - a Gezi story”. *Everywhere Taksim*, 29.08.2013 <http://everywheretaksim.net/bbc-turkish-okan-gocer-a-gezi-story/>

¹⁹⁸ Renging, “BBC Turkish: ‘Okan Gozer’ - a Gezi story”

¹⁹⁹ “Now everybody has a story”

me that I didn't endure that assault for nothing. Recovering from our injuries may take many years. 31 May was a drop of water in the ocean, but then again, an ocean is made up of water drops."²⁰⁰

A similar story has a slightly different angle in stating that despite all the police harassment the protest is going to continue:

"This was how the people expressed their thoughts: 'You can have all the power you want, we are not afraid. Sorry, Tayyip Erdoğan but we will not surrender our neighborhood.'"²⁰¹

The narratives of empowerment resemble the heroic struggle myth distinguished by Benford. It is retold within the movement and outside of it. Struggle of the protagonists is dramatized as they encounter immense difficulties on the way to their goal such as police and government intervention. However, the heroes are unbreakable and are going to continue the action, while suffering increased their motivation and made them feel right and morally superior²⁰².

Stories of resistance as group of narratives that have a broader focus than police violence, they provide additional portrayals of protest, reflections on the circumstances, goals or motivations. It would be logical to classify these narratives according to their evaluation of police violence and repression in general, and this aspect is interpreted by storytellers in two primary ways: police actions brought them to the protest and motivated them to continue resistance²⁰³; or excessive use of force made them less hopeful about the future of their country and the movement²⁰⁴. Remarkably, this typology is very similar to stories of injustice and empowerment described above. It is important to note that accounts of violence discussed as a separate types of stories are, in fact, a basic element included in nearly every story of resistance.

The plots primarily thrive on juxtaposition of unjust repression often impersonated by the police and peaceful character of resistance, as it was underscored throughout the paper. Characters, particularly, the protesters are not only static elements but are able to change. Narratives of Gezi park protesters do not simply recount various events but also demonstrate development of protagonist. The first change occurs when a "usual" person receives information about the happenings around Gezi Park, predominantly police attacks at the dawn in the first days, and starts empathizing to those who faced police unjust violence. Moral outrage urges them to join the protest to join their support and solidarity. The second change happens when

²⁰⁰ Cankiz, "Şiddet Öyküleri: 'I am looking for the witnesses of the police violence I was subjected to'"

²⁰¹ Cankiz, "Turkey Account of Violence: 'The ones who are weak are not the women!'"

²⁰² Dündar, "BirGün: My neighborhood razed to the ground"

²⁰³ Dündar, "BirGün: My neighborhood razed to the ground"

²⁰⁴ Erkmén, "Resist Istanbul: Or how I got teargassed again"

newly joined participants face and witness police brutality, which provokes a deeper moral outrage and anger and adopting a role of a resister.

This transformation during the story reflects shades of characters as an experiences and an actor, speaking the language of positioning analysis²⁰⁵. Resister is the one who is more active, determined and, probably, experienced. While not many stories make a distinction between a supporter and a resister, practically every narrative depicts learning process which makes them more ‘proficient’ participants. A person, who has never participated to such a campaign before, which is a very usual case in these protesters, is able to come and show solidarity but encounter with the police is so painful that without any knowledge and equipment, he or she cannot stand it for long. As Irem recalls her first gathering in Eskisehir:

*“As we wanted our voices to be heard, we were going to the place where we thought we had an addressee. Before getting to know what was happening, tear gas cartridges started to fall on the crowd. We didn’t have lemon, gas masks or any experience. Afterwards we all started to run about. The groups, which dispersed due to tear gas firing but mostly because of being baffled, were coming together again at different locations in the city.”*²⁰⁶

At the same time, a person who already learned how to behave and how to protect own body integrity, who “had passed the course: Introduction to Resistance 101”²⁰⁷ is capable of “struggling in the first row”²⁰⁸; carry out various tasks and ultimately sustaining the resistance and possessing more agency and control.

Another recurring plot among the stories is escalation that may appear in any previously discussed types of narratives. Escalation normally follows as a consequence of police's excessive use of force, undeserved and, therefore, unjust. It is quite similar to Wahlström's provocation plots, but the character of escalation is different – instead of transformation of peaceful protest to violent, the protest grows and participants become more determined.

Finally, despite various dissimilarities in details among narratives, the structure of the plot resembles one another. Equilibrium of an individual life or a collective is disrupted by police intervention and is restored by resistance in one form or another. Resistance as such becomes a new equilibrium. While police intervention brings pain, fear, panic, injustice, helplessness and despair, experience of protest gives hopes, strength, the feeling of being right. This cycle can be repeated several times in one story, especially if it covers several occasions of participation. It is particularly interesting, that the basic plot of stories repeats the plot of the

²⁰⁵ Hyvärinen, “26. Analyzing narratives and story-telling”, 454.

²⁰⁶ Dönmez, “No Doubt, These Kids Know Things,”

²⁰⁷ Kultukaya, “Here it was going on, in İzmir and right now”

²⁰⁸ Selcuk, “The marginal chappuler in the video images of the Dolmabahçe police violence”.

beginning of resistance. The myth of birth of Gezi, if it can be named like that, circulates around stories making them similar to each other.

To summarize the discussion above, stories of protesters have two main aspects in common – the contrast between policing style and the style of resistance. But if a part of the stories, particularly, some accounts of violence, convey the idea of injustice and helplessness, other present a narrative of transformation through resistance.

We are not going to estimate the dominant story here, because it was not possible to assess our stories with statistical methods and reveal any frequencies. It is important to note, that the stories of violence available to us were mainly collected purposefully under such category and, probably, with the aim of documenting violence and crimes, sharing information about them and, eventually, seeking for justice for the victim. Their content could have been affected by the purpose and the evaluation was only relevant to the experience of violence and not resistance as such.

5.4. Activist knowledge in Gezi Park protests

This section comprises a discussion on the findings from Gezi resistance's narratives in the light of previously introduced concept of activist knowledge understood a perception of reality by protest participants that includes reflections on both activists themselves and their role and other subjects, including the police.

Interaction between police and protesters occupies a significant and even the main part of the stories about resistance in Turkey. As we have noted before, an encounter with the police forces is one of the basic elements of every story: the topic, the course of events, outcome and evaluation differ from narrative to narrative, but an episode of confrontation with the police will be inevitably present.

In the stories about Gezi Park protesters, police is typically the agent that directly imposes extremely high cost of participation on the activists. It is a source of danger and suffering in various forms. Even though their subordination to the state is recognized by the protesters, they depict police as having discretion in what they do, and, therefore intentionally doing harm to activists. Moreover, there is little debate on alternatives for policing strategies and possibilities for negotiations, which means, protesters do not expect major improvements that would reduce risks. The police also lose its legitimacy by deploying unnecessary violence.

Protesters' perception of themselves is tightly connected with their construction of the image of the police. On the one hand, activists suffer from the actions of the police and are often represented as victims of an unjust treatment whereby the police represent the perpetrator. It soon becomes obvious that protesters are aware of the consequences of participation of protest since the police are portrayed as someone who inevitably intervenes and subjects activists to pain.

On the other hand, acceptance risk to face the police while trying to protest eventually makes activists the heroes in this situation. If it was not for the high costs that are so evident due to police excessive use of force their struggle would not be that heroic, unless there would be some other significant obstacles.

Importantly, police brutality is reflected in the protester's formulation of their role in the protest – to resist. As we have identified, resistance is portrayed as an opposition to the government's and police's attack not simply on activists, but citizens with corresponding rights.

Furthermore, as it was demonstrated in the plots of escalation and transformation, police is responsible for provoking moral outrage that eventually prompts mobilization of participants. Activists persistently repeat this plot even when other conditions or participants are different.

Therefore, perception of the police significantly contributed to the construction activist knowledge and, eventually, protesters' actions, as we will try to show below.

Stories of Gezi Park protests' participants do not make obvious the relation of their method of resistance to other elements of narrative. Presumably, if directly asked in an interview, participants could explain their incentives to act peacefully, but in the stories this aspect of resistance is articulated in a different way. While such protest was a new and unusual experience, authors do not seem find it as requiring explanation or justification. Avoiding explicit explanation of nonviolence and its role could signify that nonviolence had to be represented in a different way – as a natural trait of protesters and resistance in general.

Nevertheless, on the basis of texts we can identify several ways of interpreting nonviolent action during the Gezi Park protest events.

One of the realistic reasons to remain peaceful would be to diminish chances of being accused of illegal actions, which entails unpleasant real consequences such as detainment, fines or even imprisonment, as well as physical and verbal assaults by the policemen that take place in Turkey. For example, a participant of discussion of passive resistance methods on Ekşi Sözlük suggested using strategic locations such as consulates that are under jurisdiction of a relevant

country as places for gatherings on order to force the police to resort to violence with cautiousness²⁰⁹.

At the same time, according to the stories of Gezi Park protest peaceful activists also risk experiencing such consequences even though they do not do anything illegal or dangerous. However, violence on behalf of protesters was often labeled as provocation and portrayed as not acceptable behavior which, in contrast to the generally peaceful action of resisters, was indirectly understood as deserving punishment. For example, a protester from Izmir expressed her dissatisfaction with the radical attitude of some groups involved in the protest:

*«I found the attitude of the Turkish Communist Party and Worker's Party, who were willing to fight with the police at every opportunity, repellant. I told them, "Somebody gets hurt each time you fight," but they were not listening»*²¹⁰

The concern of the activist was not that much about the policemen who could have been injured as a result of the actions of radicals, but rather a counteraction of the police that would concern not just the radicals but all the participants. Even though involvement with the protest was already a high-risk activity, nonviolence is interpreted not just as symbolic action but as an application of "common sense"²¹¹ in order to avoid unnecessary violence.

Further, the author of the excerpt above expresses another instrumental understanding of nonviolence relevant to the concepts of backfire in nonviolent resistance alongside with passive resistance a way to decrease the cost of participation:

*"In my opinion, passive resistance was the first principle. It debased the violence of the riot squad, revealing its absurdity. The balloon of the injustice of violence was becoming bigger and bigger. Of course, being passive did not prevent people from getting hurt... That was the duty of our police!"*²¹²

This is one of the very rare examples where an activist would talk about pragmatic aspect of resistance and its use in laying bare injustices of the authorities. It is practically invisible in the stories, but such actions as sharing information about the protest and collecting stories of violence which emphasize peacefulness of the protesters and brutality of the police do carry out this duty. Hence, stories become the instrument of pragmatic nonviolence while not discussing it.

²⁰⁹"Alternative passive resistance strategies", *Ekşi Sözlük*, 08.06.2013. <https://eksisozluk.com/alternatif-pasif-direnis-stratejileri--3870007?>

²¹⁰ Kultukaya, "Here it was going on, in İzmir and right now"

²¹¹ Melis B. "Living in Taksim - Report. June 15-16, 2013" *Sinefil. A Blog of (extremely) short film reviews. And other things*, 03.07.2013. <http://sinefilmelisb.blogspot.fi/2013/06/living-in-taksim-report-june-15-16.html>

²¹² Kultukaya, "Here it was going on, in İzmir and right now"

Finally, it was observed that participants tend to emphasize their admiration with peaceful character of resistance manifested in solidarity, respect, mutual care, cooperation, and kindness. The inclination to abstain from conflict with the police is also under-scored²¹³. The image of peaceful resistance is, as we have noticed, reinforced even more powerfully by juxtaposition of nonviolent protesters and angry merciless policemen. Therefore, the image of protesters constructed on the basis of this juxtaposition transcends to the action of protesters who choose tactics corresponding to their purpose and self-perception. It does not require justification or explanation as it is natural for participants of protest to act this way, at least in the framework of the stories.

²¹³ Umay Aktaş Salman “Radikal: “If I responded to the violent police officer who shot me with violence, I wouldn’t be any different from him”, *Everywhere Taksim*, 27.06.2013. <http://everywheretaksim.net/radikal-if-i-responded-to-the-violent-police-officer-who-shot-me-with-violence-i-wouldnt-be-any-different-from-him/>

Chapter VI. Conclusion

Social movements and collective action rarely escape attempts of other forces to control them. It is particularly visible in the event of protests that inevitably become a public order situation that has to be managed by the police. Obviously, interaction between the police and protesters influences both and the effects are largely non-linear. This paper aimed to explore aspects of these complicated relationships which refer to the construction of reality by protest participants – activist knowledge - expected to ultimately shape protesters' action.

Protest in Turkey was not particularly different from contemporary collective action but represented the type of cases which are unevenly examined by different disciplines. As a transgressive action it is particularly interesting to policing studies that seek to find how events transform to riots and how to prevent such escalation. As a peaceful protest it falls under nonviolent resistance studies agenda, but does not suffice the criteria of events that are usually most interesting to them.

Our main question was about relationships between violent policing and peaceful protest action and it was discovered that there are many ways to answer it depending on the level of analysis and approach. Studying stories gave an opportunity to observe how policing style is interpreted with respect to activists' perception of their own role and identity.

Narrative approach to collective action is powerful in both exploring interpretation processes in social movements and understanding functions of storytelling. Reading stories was a fascinating process of navigating through the meanings created by protest participants.

Relationships between police and protesters during Gezi Park protests were defined by the context, government's approach and political culture, but at the same time their interaction had an internal dynamic.

According to our findings from the narratives, perception of policing style significantly contributed to interpretation of resistance. In the stories police violence is interpreted as a trigger for participation due to the moral outrage it provoked. Juxtaposition of disproportionate and unnecessary use of force by the police and peaceful character of protest in both actions and intentions served to legitimate protest as having a just cause and just means.

Moreover, portrait of struggle between police, trying to disperse and intimidate protesters with all possible means, and activists, holding their ground without resort to violence, became the definition of resistance, threading every story. There is an obvious emphasis on how peaceful the resistance was externally and internally. The rare episodes of violence on behalf of protesters are either framed as a job of provocateurs unrelated to 'real' activists, or recognized to be the action of more radical flanks of resistance and are condemned, or presented as self-defense

necessary to save one's life. Gezi Park protest was, therefore, positioned as a nonviolent resistance against police brutality and state repression implied in it.

As a conclusion, interpretation of the role of policing unfolds in two ways. Firstly, it influenced immensely the construction of activist knowledge, because the image of protesters and their role were built on the contrast between them and policemen, and the nature of their interaction with the police. Activist knowledge, in its turn, is reflected in the protesters' discussion on their action. Nonviolence as a part of protesters' image and method of action was reinforced by police brutality in both symbolic and pragmatic aspects.

Remarkably, direct formulation of tactics, strategies and more specific goals is practically absent from the stories. The authors preferred to present and/or comprehend it as an inherently peaceful spontaneous, decentralized movement based on solidarity and self-organization, not representing particular views, but rather common, morally informed interest.

Additionally, some stories reveal understanding of another instrumental role of nonviolent resistance against police brutality as a method to lay bare the real face of the regime mistreating their own citizens. This interpretation is not dominant, even though there are hints on intentions of protesters to spread the word in order to affect the government. Consequently, relations between principled and pragmatic nonviolence are not straightforward, both approaches can co-exist in one campaign, and interpretations can illuminate their relevance to the action.

Also, the results revealed resemblance to ideas that were previously elaborated in quantitative research on repression of protest. First of all, police violence indeed was a source of a strong moral outrage and increased solidarity even among people who did not previously participate in the protest, eventually increasing mobilization. Secondly, it was observed that if police's actions are mainly associated with the described above process, state repression produces both the feelings of outrage and will to participate and despair.

This paper was narrowed down to a particular method and aspect of police and protesters relations, and there are a number of ways in which it could have been improved. Because the protest was claimed to be spontaneous and leaderless, data collection did not focus on a particular type of participants. At the same time, it is clear that some of the activists played a bigger role in the organization than others and could give a more profound account of the events. Interviews as an additional method could give an opportunity to access such leaders' stories.

In addition to that, interviews would allow focusing on nonviolence as a method of resistance that remained inexplicit in the stories.

Also, analysis of discourse in the social media that played a considerable role in development and organization of the protest can substantiate arguments based on the study of narratives; provide additional insights or even opposing findings.

We would also like to suggest several topics for future research. As it was noted earlier in the paper, notions of nonviolent resistance are different not only in the literature, but among movements' participants. Borders between definitions of pragmatic and principled nonviolence are not clear cut, and there is a possibility to find new formulations in empirical material. Additional inquiry in activists' conceptions of nonviolence and protest can inform our understanding of this type of action and relevant theoretical elaborations.

Furthermore, nonviolent resistance studies can employ analysis of discursive practices in social movements in order to fill in the gap in their knowledge on nonviolent discipline. Our inquiry revealed that participants of the protest narrated as nonviolent tended to delineate from the instances of violent behavior on behalf of other activists. This can be interpreted as an expression of their personal views or as an influence of social control imposed by the story of the birth of the movement, whereby peaceful protesters were "mercilessly" attacked by the police, which later encapsulated description of practically the whole resistance. Benford's theory of "narratives as social control" was elaborated on the empirical analysis of pacifist movement and it has the explanatory power that can significantly enrich nonviolent resistance scholarship.

Finally, we believe that such events as Gezi Park protest deserve special attention with respect to the organizational and decision-making processes. Nonviolent resistance with no clear leadership and structure is not a singular event, and different disciplines should contribute more effort to research on how these types of protest formulate their tactics and strategy and maintain a certain model of action.

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